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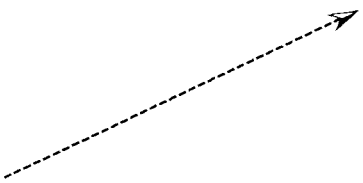

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FROM WASHINGTON

Thanks for sharing

In 1984 an MIT economist named Martin Weitzman published a short book called *The Share Economy*. The book made a new argument for an old economic reform, profit-sharing. Partisans of profit-sharing had traditionally emphasized what Weitzman called the "soft-boiled" argument that if workers have a stake in an enterprise, they will be more productive. Weitzman advanced a "hard-boiled" rationale. He claimed that profit-sharing was nothing less than the solution to a central dilemma of modern economics: how to achieve full employment without inflation.

Weitzman's argument, in its essence, contrasted the behavior of two sorts of business enterprises. Traditional companies pay workers straight wages. "Share" companies pay workers a lower "base" wage, plus a large bonus that varies with profits. When recession hits, how do these firms react? Unable to cut wages, a traditional firm might lay off 10 percent of its workers, contributing to a recessionary cycle of lost jobs, lost production, lost consumer demand and more lost jobs. But at a "share" company, everyone's bonus would automatically be lowered. There would be no need for layoffs or lost production.

In fact, a "share" firm would still want to hire new workers, as long as they added enough revenue to cover their "base" pay. Profit-sharing employers, Weitzman speculated, would cruise around "like vacuum cleaners on wheels, searching in nooks and crannies" for unemployed Americans to hire. If the economy contained enough of these companies, a vicious recessionary cycle could never get started. Workers laid off by one firm would immediately be sucked up by another. Profit-sharing would not be just a way of sharing economic pain. By smoothing out the business cycle, it would ensure there was much less pain to share.

Weitzman's theory made a large splash. A *New York Times* editorial called it the "Best Idea Since Keynes." It was promoted by Charles Robb, then governor of Virginia and a presidential hopeful who chaired the Democratic Leadership Council. Former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt, another neoliberal, said, "It's one of those very infrequent, large, large concepts that I intend to develop." Gary Hart sponsored a seminar on the subject, and Senator Dale Bumpers introduced a bill to encourage profit-sharing by partially excluding bonuses from income taxation.

And then ... nothing. Bumpers's bill went nowhere. The DLC eventually elected one of its chairmen president, but his name was Clinton, not Robb. Bill Clinton's campaign tract, *Putting People First*, doesn't mention profit-sharing, and for that matter neither does *Mandate for Change*, the DLC's would-be Clinton agenda. Though I'm writing this before Clinton's State of the Union address, I'll bet my share of TNR's profits that Clinton didn't mention Weitzman's idea there, either.

What happened? Part of the problem may be Weitzman himself. An honest, self-questioning academic with a melancholy manner, he seems ill-suited for the huckster's role so central to modern policy-making. He says he floated his idea and "waited for it to be absorbed." Imagine Arthur Laffer doing that!

More important, however, are three other factors. First, Weitzman's book addressed a particular economic problem, the persistence of inflation despite high unemployment—"stagflation." The painful recession of 1982 ended the inflation, but economists expected it to revive along with the economy. That didn't happen, in part because wages failed to rise as much as expected when the job market tightened. Unions became more timid, companies more aggressive. But this had more to do with PATCO than with profit-sharing. Profit-sharing did spread a bit during the '80s (one-sixth to one-fourth of firms now have some form of it). But the increase wasn't enough to make a huge difference. Something else solved the stagflation problem.

Second, as Weitzman notes, profit-sharing "doesn't have a constituency." Businesses don't want the government telling them how to pay their workers. Unions don't like Weitzman's plan either. Yes, if it worked as advertised it would employ millions of people who would otherwise be out of a job. But it would also force high-seniority union members to trade generous fixed wages for lower, variable wages.

Third, and most importantly, Weitzman has toned down his claims. In *The Share Economy*, he pointed to Japan, where about a fourth of industrial workers' pay comes in the form of twice-yearly bonus payments. Japan is the industrial economy that has most successfully tamed the business cycle, and Weitzman found it "highly implausible" that the bonuses didn't have something to do with this. But then he and economist Richard Freeman studied Japanese practices closely to estimate the percentage of pay that actually varied with profits. The answer wasn't 25 percent. It was more like 3 percent.

Freeman says this finding was "a little depressing." Japan's workers, it seems, don't tolerate anywhere near the degree of uncertainty in their pay that would be required to create a full-fledged Weitzman Effect. Freeman's conclusion: "Profit-sharing is good.... But it's not the vacuum cleaner" that is going to suck up unemployment. The vacuum analogy, Weitzman agrees, "may have overdone it."

None of these factors, however, justifies abandoning the profit-sharing idea. In particular, none explains why Clinton ignores it. It will still *help*. A study to be published by Rutgers economist Douglas Kruse shows that employers tend to impose fewer layoffs after switching to a profit-sharing system. Freeman thinks that even were the United States merely to match Japan in the amount of compensation that varies with profits, the payoff would be large. "If 2 to 3 percent of our wage bill were more variable [through profit-sharing] it would probably create 1 or 2 percent more jobs." One or 2 percent more jobs is the sort of difference elections turn on—the difference between the unemployment rate when Bush was elected in 1988 and when he was voted out in 1992.

True, profit-sharing won't produce all these jobs, at best, for many years. But neither will the "investments" in Head Start and fiber-optical "infrastructure" that Clinton is touting. It's also true that profit-sharing has no clearly defined constituency, other than the constituency of the whole. But neither does deficit reduction.

Weitzman's "hard-boiled" arguments aren't the only ones in favor of profit-sharing. There is still the well-documented soft-boiled argument that profit-sharing tends to boost productivity. There is even, I think, a plausible argument that profit-sharing, when accompanied by more democratic management practices, can help restrain the "increasing inequality" of income that Clinton recently called one of "our deepest problems."

Indeed, profit-sharing is a Clintonesque idea if there ever was one. It seems postideological, yet vaguely populist. It is slightly gimmicky. It "challenges" America to "change," calling on both labor and management, as Weitzman notes, to "look at risk differently." It also might make a big difference for the better.

How about it?

MICKEY KAUS

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4 **MICKEY KAUS** TRB: THANKS FOR SHARING A good idea whose time has come.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** Nice letters from our readers for a change.

9 **THE EDITORS** HIGH HOPES How to judge Clinton's economic plan.

10 **NOTEBOOK** Christopher's Mideast wisdom, Paul Tsongas, our little hero, &c.

11 **JIM HOLT** CONSUMED: PET SHOP JOYS Shopping for my nice little schnauzer.

13 **JULIE BURCHILL** TO DI FOR Why I love the pop princess.

14 **MICHAEL LEWIS** NAUGHTY BUT NICE In praise of cynicism.

16 **FRED BARNES** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: GETTING ORGANIZED Clinton's building mo.

18 **JEROME GROOPMAN** T.B. OR NOT T.B.? A constructive proposal to halt a plague.

19 **PAUL W. KAHN** LOVE FIELD Can soldiers love their country and each other?

21 **JACOB WEISBERG** BABBITT'S FEAST Clinton's finest Cabinet appointment.

25 **JEFFREY ROSEN** POETIC JUSTICE David Souter, the Court's pleasant surprise.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: THE SAME, ONLY DIFFERENT Two remakes: *Sommersby* and *The Vanishing.*

29 **ANTHONY GRAFTON** THE SENSE OF AN ENDING *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* by Paul Boyer; *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* by Ronald Numbers

34 **CHRISTOPHER BENFEY** THE ENIGMA OF ARRIVAL *Dark Harbor: A Poem* by Mark Strand

37 **CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN** INVENTING BRITAIN *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* by Linda Colley

40 **WENDY LESSER** FREE SPIRITS *The Oracle at Stoneleigh Court* by Peter Taylor

41 **CRAIG ANTHONY ARNOLD** POEM *Sainte-Chapelle*

42 **MARTIN PERETZ** CAMBRIDGE DIARIST: NASTY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Nice one

To the editors:

As a full-time writing tutor for college-level students who are considered by the federal government to be traditionally underrepresented minorities in our university system and/or economically or educationally disadvantaged, I found James Traub's piece on political correctness and basic writing to be right on the mark ("Back to Basic," February 8). I too am tired of the academic hype and the touchy-feely treatise on the attack of the colonizer's English on the American underclass and minorities.

I work daily with college students who do not speak proper English. Never has the issue of "slavemasters" or "colonizers" been brought up by these students who come to me for free help with writing. The questions I hear are why do they not know how to write properly? Why have they never been told how bad their writing really is until they get to college? And how far back will they have to step before they will gain the skills to compete with their peers and receive an education to which they are entitled in our democratic country? They want honesty, and they want to learn the things they should have been taught but were not—one of those things being basic English.

CONNIE L. VIVRETT
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio

Sugar bowl

To the editors:

I thoroughly enjoyed Michael Lewis's Sugar Bowl reflections (New Orleans Diarist, "Bowled Over," January 25). Like Lewis and his friend, I passed the evening of January 1 in the nosebleed section of the Louisiana Superdome watching the University of Alabama successfully claim college football's national championship.

The self-defining importance of college football to the Southern male (I am one) cannot be understood through mere reportage; rather, it must be experienced firsthand. When Southern schools clash on the gridiron, it's "our" clan, family and colors against "them" in a grand cultural contest that far transcends mere athletics. It is therefore of no small social consequence that black athletes and fans are now embraced within the intimate "family" experience that is the quintessence of Southern collegiate football.

When the definitive history of the progress of race relations in the American South is written, the Bear Bryants and the Bo Jacksons will be entitled to hero status alongside the Frank Johnsons and the Medgar Everses. Indeed, with the probable exception of the U.S. District Court, perhaps no Southern institution has been so instrumental in breaking down the walls of racial bigotry as has the Southeastern Conference.

Although America regretfully continues to fall short of Dr. King's dream of a society where a man is judged on the content of his character alone, Lewis correctly demonstrates that for the Southern football fan, at least, the color of a man's skin is of considerably less importance than the color of his jersey. Perfection? No. Progress? Absolutely.

GREG SNOWDEN
Meridian, Mississippi

Stimulating

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen's stimulating article on Justice Antonin Scalia's constitutional philosophy and judgments ("The Leader of the Opposition," January 18) raises again the question of why the apostles of judicial restraint and limited construction have failed to draw the proper lesson from the first Justice Harlan's dissent in the Civil Rights Cases of 1883. Robert Bork, for whom Harlan was a judicial hero, drew the lessons of colorblindness and letting Congress fulfill its constitutional power of legislation. But he neglected the full implication of Harlan's insistence that the Fourteenth Amendment in its historical context was intended to guarantee equal rights to a certain class: people of the black race. Moreover, reading broadly, Harlan contended that it applied to private parties and corporations that restricted equal access to public accommodations, although, read literally, the text only applies to the states. Harlan went on to envisage a time when "some other race may fall under the ban of race discrimination," and extended the generalization to apply to "any class of human beings in practical subjection to another."

It seems that women, gays, the handicapped and others with a practical "badge of inferiority" under certain social conditions would fall into this category. I just wonder how conservative jurists who claim to be narrow constructionists can make a hero out of Justice Harlan while neglecting his basic insights. I don't have the full text of the Civil Rights Cases dissent in front of me, but I'm sure Jeffrey Rosen will have it eas-

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ily at hand and can correct any errors I may have made.

SEYMOUR CAIN
San Diego, California

Be nice to Hillary

To the editors:

My favorite part of Mickey Kaus's TRB on how Hillary Clinton threatens the Republic ("Thinking of Hillary," February 15) is where he says that because she supported her husband against philandering charges during the campaign, she could exert "unusual leverage" against the president. Presumably she holds Bill, and by extension the nation, over a barrel. Here is a man who has watched *The Manchurian Candidate* once too often.

In trying to convince us that the people who fear Mrs. Clinton's impact on the presidency are not exclusively men feeling threatened by a competent woman in power, the curious arguments Kaus musters point us toward that very conclusion. We pay Bill Clinton to stand up to the Butcher of Baghdad, but Kaus frets that the president can't tell his wife to take a hike if he disagrees with her policy positions. Instead of railing that Hillary is Rasputin and Alexandra rolled into one, our author should be grateful we have a First Lady who bases political advice to her husband on more than the daily horoscope column.

STEVEN A. WOLFE
Washington, D.C.

Marvelous

To the editors:

I hope you will do everything possible to keep Alan Wolfe well disposed to TNR. "School Daze" (February 8) is a marvelous piece of work, the very mode of the great good sense that can be made in an omnibus review. In all of Wolfe's work for TNR, I have never detected any predisposing ideology, but only the guiding muses of the magazine's powerful unifying reflectiveness, and an intense thirst for facts.

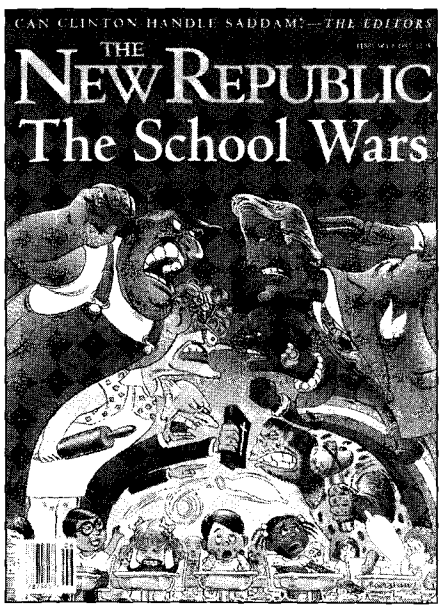
HAL RIEDL
Baltimore, Maryland

On the mark

To the editors:

John B. Judis is on the mark in noting that President Clinton "has distanced himself from much of America" by his Cabinet appointments ("The Old Democrat," February 22). As Judis writes, "The bankers, lawyers and staff members of the liberal lobbies display less interest in the kinds of economic or social problems that bedevil most Americans—from streetcorner crime to high taxes to factory closings." These glitzocrats do show keen interest in one particular solution: the ordinary American must sacrifice. It is surprising that Judis, having criticized liberal "elites who see the country as an extension of their own sociocultural enthusiasms," should accept the prescription of these elites to maintain their wealth and power: "Middle-class voters . . . must bear much of the sacrifice needed to address America's economic problems." That is to say, it falls to the ordinary American to clean up the mess created by our latter-day Tom and Daisy Buchanans, none of whom was much interested in personal sacrifice, in F. Scott Fitzgerald's day or ours.

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York



Doing good

To the editors:

Anna Husarska's article "The Bodyguards" (February 15) describes not only the horrifying conditions that millions of people in Somalia confront day by day, but also some heroic help provided to them by Médecins Sans Frontières and other groups around the world. The article did not mention the very fine private voluntary organizations from the United States that have been at least the equal of any other relief organization in Somalia.

An outstanding example is the Los Angeles-based International Medical Corps, which has operated in Somalia for approximately eighteen months with thirty to forty staff people in place at all times. The IMC has saved the lives of thousands of people by providing specialized nutritional care as well as medical help to those who with certainty would die or be incapacitated without it. Individually these doctors and nurses are heroic and the organization overall has been, and continues to be, of immense benefit to the people of Somalia.

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger has provided substantial funds to the IMC to help save lives and allow thousands of Somalis to face their future, as uncertain as it may be. We take pride in our part of this effort, but particularly in the response of such U.S.-based organizations as the IMC.

IRVING CRAMER
Executive Director, MAZON
Los Angeles, California

You're welcome

To the editors:

This is to tell you how much I enjoyed Douglas G. McGrath's series of articles titled "The Shrub File." I don't know how many people I told about it—but it was quite a few. McGrath really has an ability to capture characterization effectively and humorously. I think those rare people such as McGrath who can create humor or see the humor in our everyday dreariness are a special gift to humanity.

Thank you, thank you for the great series.

I kept looking for some notice about when the book of McGrath's collected essays will come out and where I can get one. Surely you are going to issue these wonderful essays in a collection. Please?

Again, thanks for the enjoyment that McGrath's delightful sense of humor and creative writing skills have given me as well as so many others.

JEAN BLEVINS
Alexandria, Virginia

Precision

To the editors:

In her tumbling brook of horned rampions ("The Horned Rampion," January 25) Amy Clampitt unveils the precise excellence that is in the dirt at our feet. Thank you, Amy.

DAVID R. LEDWIDGE
Portland, Oregon

Be nice to Kinsley

Editors' note: A letter in last week's Correspondence column took Michael Kinsley to task because, in a TRB column, he referred to a "Secretary (Typing)" listed in the government's "Plum Book" as "she." As the column perhaps should have made clear, the Plum Book lists not just jobs but the names of their current occupants. The holder of that particular job is a woman.

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And keep as many Americans as we can out of the emergency room.

For more information about this subject and other ways that The Prudential is working for health care reform, write: New Approaches to Health Care, The Prudential, 751 Broad Street, 16th Fl., Newark, N.J. 07102-3777.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 8, 1993

HIGH HOPES

The sheer drama of the buildup to Bill Clinton's economic address is itself testimony to how dysfunctional our democracy has become. After ten years of budget finagling and a quadrupling of the national debt, there is still enormous political pressure to avoid a real attack on the budget deficit. From all appearances, Clinton will face down this pressure. If he does, he should be rewarded for providing a minor, but critical, measure of fiscal sanity—a mere $150 billion cut in the deficit, a paltry 2 percent of GNP—and adding exponentially to this country's future economic stability and growth. It matters, of course, how he does this; and our final judgment will have to wait until next week, when we know the details. What we propose here are several criteria to judge what he says.

Does he break the structural deficit? For years Reagan and Bush cooked the figures, assumed rosy rates of future growth or made savings that would help next year but hurt further down the line. Clinton's seriousness should be measured simply by whether his plan credibly reduces the structural deficit *to* $150 billion (not *by* $150 billion) by 1996. Good sign: projected growth at under 2.5 percent a year. Bad sign: blather about "cutting waste and fraud in government." Really bad sign: stimulus package increases in Head Start, Community Development Block Grants and nutrition programs turn out to be permanent gains, rather than one-year deals.

Are there real spending cuts? Outside defense, this means tackling Social Security payments to the old and wealthy and forcing them to pay higher premiums for Medicare. Clinton's plan is touted as subjecting 85 percent of Social Security payments to the income tax and squeezing more premiums out of the pampered elderly. If true, good for Clinton. Better sign: agriculture spending cuts of more than $6 billion. Even better sign: getting rid of the space station and auctioning off the electromagnetic spectrum. Bad sign: any increases in domestic discretionary spending not offset with cuts elsewhere. Worse sign: timber subsidies left untouched, supercollider funded. Danger sign: directing all government agencies to find cuts in budgets (it won't happen).

Are the tax hikes equitable and congruent with simple, fair taxation? The 1986 tax reform was, in our view, the high water mark of good government in the last decade. It generated more compliance in paying taxes, allowed the market to operate more efficiently by reducing the perverse incentives that government imposes upon economic actors and lifted the burden of taxation for the working middle class. For the most part, Clinton has been sympathetic to tax reform. He campaigned against the notion that taxation was merely a tool of redistribution and micromanagement of the economy. We hope he sticks with the principles of 1986. His taxation of the very rich should not, so far as is possible, return us to the days of taxation-as-social-engineering. Nor should his tax increases, which we support as part of a coherent deficit-reduction plan, be accomplished primarily by raising basic rates of income tax, rather than by closing loopholes for the rich and lawyerly. Good sign: limiting the mortgage interest deduction to $12,000 a year and tackling the tax deductions of big business's entertainment expenses. Bad sign: any hike in the top rate to more than 35 percent. Danger sign: investment tax credits and capital gains tax cuts.

From what we know now, Clinton's plan is not ideal. We would have preferred a Panetta-style bargain, in which tax increases were dwarfed by real spending cuts. We wanted this because, in many areas, government is redirecting income to people who do not need it; and because we believe more money should be spent on those things, such as effective workfare reform, that might actually do some tangible good. We also think a Panetta deal would have been more in Clinton's political interest. If the deficit-reduction package is truly to work politically, it must win the confidence of prudent Republicans and restless Perotians. That means restraining government now in order to focus it later; slowing growth now in order to accelerate it later; sacrificing now in order to grow more securely later.

Clinton is unlikely to produce this dream package. He is not the president of whom dreams are made; he is still a hybrid of old and new Democrat, without the new part of him clearly winning out. But if he comes at all close to cutting the structural deficit to a real $150 billion, without relying exclusively on distortive tax hikes and excessive defense cuts, he deserves support. Unlike his weak, dissembling predecessor, he will have broken the taboo of fiscal honesty and set some kind of groundwork for future economic health. That is not perfection; but it is the beginning of sanity. •

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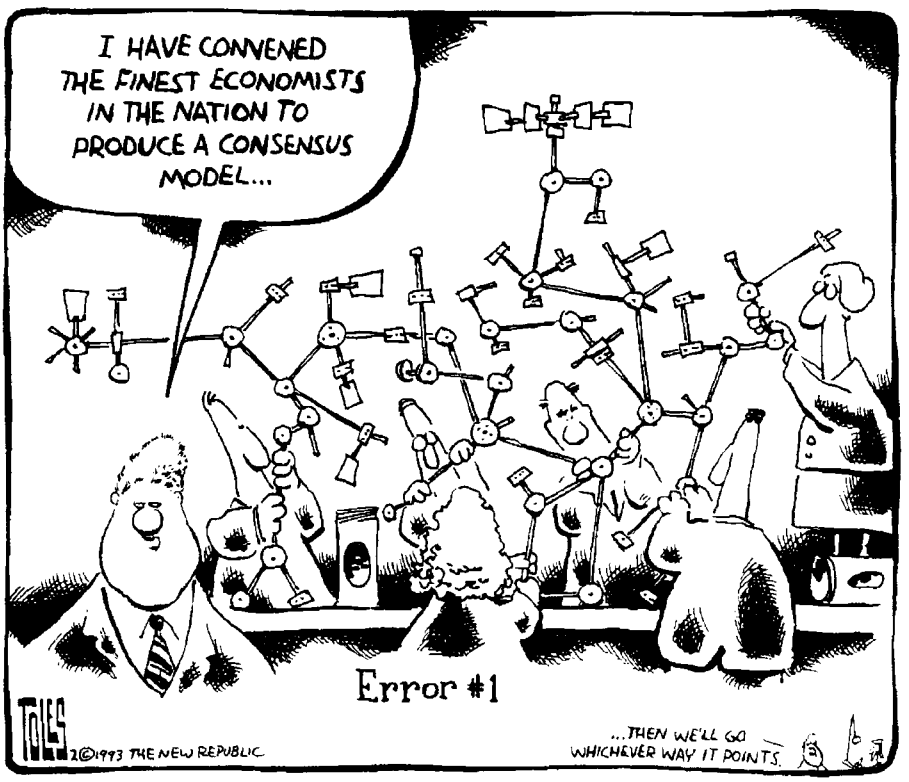
NOTEBOOK

CLINTONISM WATCH: "I'm working on funding it just as close to what I recommended during the campaign, about putting people as first as possible." —Bill Clinton on his national service program, February 4
(thanks to Paul Goddard, Birmingham, Michigan)

OOPA!: President Clinton's February 15 speech to the nation, a prelude to his economic speech to Congress, had us reaching for our copies of Paul Tsongas's "An Economic Call to Arms." Not only was the rhetoric of sacrifice similar, but Clinton's actual policies—rumored, as of this writing, to include an energy tax, a cut in entitlement spending and a middle-class tax increase—all bring to mind our little friend from Massachusetts. We are also reminded of Clinton's nasty attacks on Tsongas's ideas during the campaign. So we lift our glass of ouzo to Tsongas for having had the moral fortitude, if not the political good sense, to lay the groundwork for Clinton's apparent conversion to fiscal responsibility.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...THEN WE'LL GO WHICHEVER WAY IT POINTS.

CREDIT DUE: The Clinton administration has shown itself to be both tough and wise in its first test on Arab-Israeli issues. The secretary of state made clear to the Rabin government that it would have to help itself get off the roof on which it seemed awkwardly but voluntarily perched. This meant Israel would have to permit the return of a substantial number of the expelled Palestinian terrorists, but almost all of them, as it happens, to jail. Jerusalem and Washington settled on 101 as a substantial number, leaving some 300 others just across the border from the security zone in Lebanon. With this agreement in hand, the American representative to the Security Council made clear to the other delegations that the United States would not countenance pressing Israel any further on the deportations. Sanctions were out of the question. Which put the matter of continuing the peace talks squarely in the court of the Palestinians, who have the most to gain from the negotiations and almost nothing to lose. This is a signal to the Arabs that, unlike under the Bush-Baker regime, they will not be able to squeeze out one Israeli concession after another just to get them to the conference table. That message of American impatience with Palestinian petulance will be crucial in persuading the Arabs that compromise is a reciprocal transaction. After all, Israel can still live perfectly well with the territories. It's the Palestinians who say they can't live without them. Their move.

NOW FOR SOME REALLY GOOD NEWS: "Eight years after crack hit New York and other cities around the country, and concern about a generation of 'crack babies' began spreading, medical experts say their worst fears are not being realized: while up to a third appear to have been seriously damaged, 20 to 40 percent seem unscathed. Most encouragingly, the experts say, those who have been harmed by cocaine need not be written off as a lost generation, but can be greatly improved with therapy and other special attention. Not all recover fully, but many do." —*The New York Times*, "For Children of Cocaine, Fresh Reasons for Hope," February 16, page 1

FULL COURT PRESS: Peruvian dictator Alberto Fujimori's reaction to his bad ink isn't particularly creative: he's now muzzling the press. Anything that smacks of "apology for terrorism" may be investigated by the regime; reporters have been jailed and silenced. The man behind the Peruvian regime, presidential adviser Vladimiro Montesinos, is suing the editor of *Caretas* to prevent publication of a story about Montesinos's involvement with drug traffickers. A court packed with Fujimori supporters upheld the spurious suit, which revolved around an earlier *Caretas* piece that called Montesinos a "Rasputin." For that, Enrique Zileri was slapped with a $10,000 fine, forbidden to leave Peru and

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put on probation for a year. When *Caretas* ran another piece not to Montesinos's liking, the judge added half a year to the probation term. The editor of another magazine, Ricardo Uceda of *Sí*, is under investigation for running a piece that placed the blame for a November 1991 massacre in Lima on the security forces. It's worth remembering that Haiti isn't the only place in the Americas where democracy was recently overthrown.

STRAIGHT TALKING: One of the consequences of the failed Zoe Baird nomination and the failed Kimba Wood neo-nomination was that the final nominee was a single woman, with no children. But this, according to Nina Totenberg on National Public Radio, was not the end of the Clinton administration's worries. "According to administration sources," Totenberg reported, "the White House satisfied itself that Reno was not gay before going ahead with the nomination." Now that they've abolished such questions for the armed services, are they really introducing them for the Cabinet?

FLASHBACK: For those who still do not view the position of gays in the military in the same light as those former policies that discriminated against blacks and women, we reprint the following covers from the VFW magazine from 1936 and 1937. The covers were sent to us by a reader, Andy Moursund, of Washington, D.C. We think they speak for themselves.

CONSUMED

PET SHOP JOYS

By Jim Holt

Pets are jolly things to have about. At home I am environed by them. Fin, feather and fur, paw and claw—all are spoken for. I have a pair of angel fish dubbed Lucy and Freud; a brace of budgies called Gracie and Dovebar; and a toy dachshund named Doogie (after the Proust character, *bien sûr*). Throughout the day they abjectly beseech me for food and attention: power!

A couple of weeks ago the census of dumb chums in my apartment rose to six when I liberated a crawfish from the local seafood market. He (she?) looked so winsome cavorting around on the ice with his doomed fellow crustaceans. At $1.79 a pound, the ransom came to a reasonable 29 cents. Ignoring a barbaric cooking tip proffered by the man behind the counter, I spirited my new acquisition home, baptized him "Renzo" (after an architect I admire) and plunked him into a commodious bowl with a bit of water. He is larking about there at this very moment.

I have read that Americans spend more money on pets than on defense and space exploration combined. As one who haunts the pet shops of Manhattan, examining flea powders and stain removers while coveting the high-ticket items on display, I am not surprised. More than once have I been on the verge of ordering a custom chesterfield for my dog, which several canine emporiums make available. How dapper he would look sporting a fringed faux-leather bomber jacket (*"très macho, très chic"*) as he scudded along the sidewalk sniffing out the urinary vestiges of other dogs. How sweetly he would repose in the four-poster brass puppy bed with the handmade satin mattress. How proudly he would inhabit the Buckminster Fuller-inspired Doggie Dymaxion House. How fragrant he would smell with a bit of Le Chien—an original line of canine perfume on offer at an Upper East Side boutique—dabbed behind his pendulous ears.

But no. The little ratter would not appreciate these things. Animal utility functions are not like those of humans: conspicuous consumption does not figure in them. A mule, it is said, would prefer the sweepings from a barn floor to a pile of gold. Ditto for dogs. A fetid sneaker to rip apart, a knotted sock to tug on, a compost heap to rootle around in—these are the kind of goods they prize.

My own pup's proudest possession is a severed deer's leg, nearly twice his size, that he managed to

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drag out of the woods near my country house. No matter how many times I threw the putrescent limb back into the undergrowth, I would always find Doogie worrying it contentedly a few hours later. Finally I let him keep the thing—after all, it *was* free. (A tip for city-dwellers: if you would like a deer's leg for your own dog, they can usually be found on sale from sidewalk vendors on West 42nd Street.)

Grooming is scarcely more expensive. Once a month I must take Doogie to have his nails clipped. For this we push round the corner to Dee Dee's Dog-a-rama (which I mention in return for a small consideration in trade), where the pooch greatly enjoys climbing on the ample bosom of the proprietress, then shrieks to high heaven when the toenail scissors come out. Total cost: five bucks.

But beware the trip to the veterinarian. I'll never forget the time I had to rush a friend's Pomeranian to the animal hospital after it had gobbled up a possibly fatal quantity of marijuana—not, I was told, an uncommon emergency in Greenwich Village. The quivering little ball of fur was given an injection behind the eye that induced instant vomiting. Fascinated, I remarked that what came up looked rather like pesto sauce—whereupon the vet told me she wished I hadn't pointed that out, as pesto had hitherto been one of her favorite things. She then handed me a bill that rivaled what I pay for root canal work.

My tropical fish are an altogether simpler and more economical matter. Their aquarium is prettily decorated with a couple of plastic plants and a swizzle stick from a *Spy* magazine party, and is periodically cleaned with a roommate's toothbrush. I must have a scaly thumb, for they look as though they will live forever. Not so the birds. When Thunderbird, the forerunner of one of my current pair, developed an inoperable tumor, the vet suggested I have it put down. I assented. "Would you like your little friend buried or cremated?" he asked. "Oh," I said, "whatever's the least bother." He and the nurse shot me a horrified look, as if I were an unfeeling brute. To placate them I quickly plumped for burial, which seemed the more dignified option. The cost was in the low three figures, and I'll bet they just threw the bum bird out the window. I could have performed the interment much more cheaply myself with a "critter casket" I later spotted on sale, "a tastefully designed dome-shaped resting place for your special companion who is eight inches in length or less."

The current cagelings are a well-behaved duo with modest needs, requiring only a cuttlebone to hone their beaks on and a little pool to splash around in. Following the instructions in my recently purchased *Budgie Bible*, I have taught them to say a few words; mind you, no improprieties—"which," the handbook warns, "might be uttered at an inappropriate time, such as when the curate is visiting." On Saturday mornings I let them out of their cage for an aerobic flutter around the apartment. Once I released one *al fresco*; flying vertiginously from treetop to treetop, exhilarated by the infinite space, she at length heeded my hysterical calls and alighted on my finger. I felt like St. Francis.

My dachshund, by contrast, poses a serious behavioral problem. All friendly overtures from strangers are repulsed with a barrage of barking; he is particularly ferocious toward small children and blind people. Hoping to avoid expensive therapy, I purchased an issue of *Dogworld* for advice, only to find *recherché* articles like "The Hounds of Wagner" ("The composer's canines fared better than his creditors and consorts," I read).

There seemed to be no alternative to obedience school—until I saw an announcement that the Episcopal bishop of New York would be performing a "blessing of the animals" that Sunday, which happened to be the feast of St. Francis. We hastened to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on the appointed morning, joined by a throng of 6,000 congregants with nearly 2,000 beasts: dogs, cats, turtles, snakes, ferrets, a camel and a few celebrities—notably Linus the orangutan and Mini the elephant (who deposited a large load of pachyderm fertilizer on the cathedral steps). Interspecific harmony prevailed. Only during the overlong homily did the dogs set up a chorus of howls, and frankly I felt like howling myself when I heard the homilist describe Francis of Assisi as "the first postmodern saint."

At the end of the service—whose liturgy was as interminable and exotic as Haile Selassie's coronation mass—I escorted Doogie to the bishop for his hallowing. "May you be the means by which your master spreads love and reconciliation throughout the world," he intoned at my sullen pup. Hey, I thought, this is supposed to be about the four-legged one's virtue, not mine! As we departed the cathedral grounds Doogie snapped savagely at a little girl who tried to pet him. The grace had no effect; he was as demonic as ever. Episcopalians have weak magic—this hound needs an exorcist.

JIM HOLT is a regular TNR contributor.

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Why I love the pop princess.

TO DI FOR

By Julie Burchill

"Oh, I've got that one! I loved it! Unfortunately, my husband disapproves of my reading taste. He doesn't like me reading light novels." —Diana Spencer, 1986, on seeing a Danielle Steele novel on the bedside table of a hospital she was visiting

Besieged by the press during her engagement, Diana Spencer said, "Don't make me sound like a bookworm, because I'm not, but I'll read almost anything I can get my hands on, from women's magazines to Charles Dickens. I read because I enjoy it." Historically, this attitude to books is found among the naturally bright more often than is the pathetic, phony, posey cramming of Solzhenitsyn and Kafka that characterizes Princess Diana's now estranged husband. Their I.Q.s were perfectly compatible; the difference was that he was pretentious and she was not. Were we really to believe Prince Charles craved "intellectual companionship" when the woman he rejected his wife for was Camilla Parker Bowles?

The difference between Charles and Diana, above all, was cultural. It was not the case that Princess Diana was the first "modernizer" of the royal family—Queen Victoria in the last century and the present queen in the '60s went a good way toward making the dynasty the Family Firm it is today, with their attention to media and public relations. But Diana was the first royal icon raised on and sustained by pop culture. She was the Pop Princess. This went far further than the string of spats with her husband over her reading habits, her lack of interest in the visual arts and her love of cheap music—most memorably, when she came onstage during Wayne Sleep's 1985 Royal Opera House show and did a three-minute routine to Billy Joel's "Uptown Girl." This included several "high kicks" over Sleep's head, which made the unprepared Prince Charles "nearly fall out of the royal box," the dancer laughed later.

The princess's popness was ultimately seen in her immediacy, her fresh and open emotions and her impatience with protocol—in fact, everything that made her so lovable and loved. (Just before the end, she overtook the queen for the first time as the most popular member of the royal family.) There was the feeling among the British that she was the one member of the ruling house who was actually happier among *the* people than among *her* people. The only member of the royal family not to wear gloves when shaking hands—though, interestingly, she wore them at family occasions; this was not a phobia, but a choice—she endlessly took on new public engagements and played hooky only on family leisure time, especially when incarcerated at Sandringham or Balmoral. Her smiles of elation and tears of compassion when with the young, old or sick were a stark contrast to the look of sheer boredom that clouded her face during family parties. Like all great stars, she was only truly alive when performing.

Faced with this strong, charismatic figure as his wife, the Prince of Wales (does Bill Clinton come to mind?) acted like a true wimp. When he said jokingly on the eve of their wedding that Diana was "far more English than me," he wasn't joking. She may moan to her men friends on the cellular phone, but in public she epitomizes the mustn't grumble refusal to take oneself too seriously that characterizes the best of British. There was, contrarily, something Not Quite Our Type about him and his behavior, a horrible hybrid of American psychobabbling self-pity, German pomposity and Scandinavian introspection. Knowing full well that he is not possessed of anything like a first-class mind, he settled into a sort of permanent whining restlessness that dumb people consider makes them seem "deep." But being dissatisfied and being deep are not the same thing.

Diana rose effortlessly above this, her life becoming a hot, modern, media career, accelerating while her husband's pathetic curriculum vitae dribbled into irrelevance. In him, all the anal-retentive agonizing of po; in her, all the unpretentious energy of pop. She was particularly pop in the way she handled the press. The family had used the press to leak bulletins before. But no one member of the family had ever used the press against another member, as the POW did. After the initial post-honeymoon-period tantrums and tears, she settled into a mutually supportive arrangement with the media that seemed to give her far more pleasure than her actual marriage. On one Egyptian jaunt, she threw a cocktail party for them; when the elderly *Sun* photographer Arthur Edwards fell ill, she took him medicine. When she noticed a missing face, she asked if the reporter or photographer had moved on to greater things. "You won't need me, now you've got Fergie," she

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teased a hack pack after the York's marriage.

Her preference was for the tabloids: "You're from the *Financial Times*? We took that at home," she told a preening hack. "Yes, I believe we used to line the budgie's cage with it." On one occasion she amazed assembled newsmen by asking them if they remembered what a large bosom she had had as a young woman. When Edwards derided a gown she had worn before, she shot back, "Arthur, I suppose *you'd* prefer it if I turned up naked." "Well, at least I could get a picture of you in the paper that way," he countered.

She is their creature, and with them she conspires to win even more power. At times, it could be a more refined, relaxed Madonna talking: "Oh, you should have seen those Arabs going ga-ga when they saw me on the Gulf tour," the journalist Judy Wade once heard her swank to a group of hacks. "I gave them the full treatment, and they were just falling over themselves. I just turned it on and mopped them up."

It is ironic that the woman held up as the ultimate wife and mother was actually *more* domestic before her marriage. Statistics show (she said) that the careers of women in bad marriages get better; the careers of such men get worse. But Diana's very success became her next challenge: Where does it go from here? After having the love of the world, is there any way that isn't down? Diana, dead on an unmade bed at 33 with dirty fingernails after last rites of Southern Comfort? No; Diana has lived a pop star's life but would never die a pop star's death. *Breeding*, you see.

She is now a model, modern single parent—and seems quite happy that way. Far beyond being a Windsor, Diana has become an icon of sexy saintliness—the Church of England at play, in high heels—a living rebuke to the tired, stale Britain that the rest of the royal family represents. Her marriage to Charles was thus doomed from the start. This is the man who, when asked if he was in love with his radiant teenage fiancée, said, "Yes—whatever 'love' means." And this is the girl who, to soothe the nerves of her dressers as she stepped into the Glass Coach that would take her to St. Paul's Cathedral, serenaded them with a jingle from an ice cream commercial.

When asked by bigots if one approves of "mixed" marriages, it is always a good move to raise an eyebrow, smile archly and reply: "But aren't all marriages mixed—involving as they all do a man and a woman?" Yes, all marriages are mixed—but few were as mixed as the marriage of Windsor and Spencer. Display—scarlets and purples of robes and gowns—has always been a crucial part of the British monarchy; with Diana, it spoke in an idiom the world understood, the language of Belville Sassoon, Catherine Walker and Jasper Conran. Charles was a link with the past—but Diana was the Windsors' lifeline to the future. When they cut it, they cut their own throats as the Roundheads had cut the throats of royalty before them.

JULIE BURCHILL writes for *The Modern Review*.

In praise of cynicism.

NAUGHTY BUT NICE

By Michael Lewis

On the back page of *The New York Times* recently there appeared an intriguing full-page advertisement for a dead man. It began:

WE ARE ALL BETTER PEOPLE FOR HAVING KNOWN HIM. WHAT GREATER LEGACY COULD ANY MAN LEAVE? ALL HE ACHIEVED IN LIFE—THE INSTITUTION HE BUILT AND THE FRONTIERS HE PIONEERED—WAS DRIVEN BY THE WAY HE REACHED OUT AND DREW EVERYONE HE TOUCHED INTO THE WARM AND VIBRANT CIRCLE OF HIS BEING.

At this point the cynic begins to lick his chops, sensing that anyone whom these words described accurately would hardly require a paid advertisement. Such a pillar would be lionized on every network and eulogized on the front page of every newspaper, gratis. Yet on it went, at great expense:

HE MADE PEOPLE WANT TO BE BETTER THAN THEY EVER DREAMED THEY COULD POSSIBLY BE, JUST TO KEEP UP WITH HIM.

Arthur Ashe? Jesus Christ? No.

STEVEN J. ROSS . . . BY ANY MEASURE, A TOWERING SUCCESS

Moments such as these make a cynic's morning. While he lived, Steven J. Ross, the chairman of Time Warner Inc., had a knack for separating his shareholders from their money, which he spent on corporate jets, Italian villas and the good opinion of the people who mattered to him. He paid himself $69 million in a year in which the company's stock languished. So it is deliciously fitting that the beleaguered shareholders now find themselves stuck with the tab for a posthumous p.r. campaign. (The single ad in the *Times* cost Time Warner about $50,000, according to *The New York Times*. Confronted with this, a spokesman for Time Warner first asked, "What would be wrong if we *had* paid for it?," then called back to say, "It may have been debited against our account, but we haven't paid for it.") No doubt they would have preferred, had they been asked, to put the money toward a twenty-four-hour armed guard on Ross's grave site, to whack his fingers when they came poking through the soil to collect one last bonus. As it is, the company is burdened with another piece of Rossian self-aggrandizement, a "golden coffin," which stipulates that Ross is to be paid a salary for the next five years.

But by far the greatest of the many cynical pleasures to be had from the ad is that it will almost surely have

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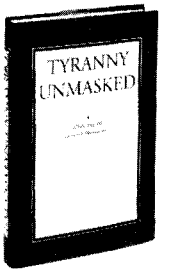

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the effect desired: after reading it people will think a bit better of Steven J. Ross, and, by extension, of his hand-picked successors at Time Warner, who authorized the expenditure. Even more delightfully strange: in any popularity contest Steven J. Ross will win handily over the cynic who dances on his grave.

Like Ross's remains, cynics have something of an image problem. You never hear anyone say, "What a great guy! He's so cynical!" The word "cynic" itself is an epithet. Every huckster knows that accusing others of cynicism is an inexpensive way around making an argument for his product. For example, a journalist who wants to put across some sweet, unfounded emotion invariably begins by offering "the cynics" as a whipping boy to distract the reader. (Philip Hamburger, writing up the Inaugural for *The New Yorker*, ends a long, sentimental passage with the sentence: "Cynics don't buy this, but there are times when hope is palpable.") The journalist reluctant to speak harsh truths in his own voice is forever pushing forward "a cynic" to serve as flak catcher. ("A cynic might say," writes Anthony Lewis, who would like for the United States to become actively involved in Bosnia, "that relief merely enables the Bosnians to live another day to be slaughtered by the Serbs.") So perhaps it's worth saying a few nice words about those who are "disposed to disbelieve in human sincerity or goodness" (OED), even if they themselves will probably refuse to swallow them.

One of the contradictions in American life is that while the society was constructed upon a profoundly cynical view of human nature, the cynics within it are made to feel unwelcome. The triumph of capitalism over communism—the victory of a cynical assumption about our characters over a credulous one—hasn't made a dent in our hypocrisy toward cynics. I imagine that the reason for this is the popular conception of the cynic as a dark, bitter, disillusioned man spreading pessimism and unhappiness wherever he goes.

It is false. The cynic sees the world as a vast comic tableau. The distance he puts between himself and others saves him time, money, anxiety and a great deal of moral indignation. He avoids ever having to be disillusioned, since he was never illusioned in the first place. What is more, his view that his own species is absurd leaves him well prepared for what might otherwise be the saddest of life's events, death. Other peoples' especially.

It is no coincidence that the most perfectly cynical American, Ambrose Bierce, was also notoriously happy. He is best known for his comic dictionary, originally titled *The Cynic's Word Book*, but now known as *The Devil's Dictionary*. ("CYNIC, n. a blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be.") Of a former employer who he believed had cheated him Bierce once wrote as a mock epitaph: "Here lies Frank Pixley, as usual." The great cynic H. L. Mencken, in a paean to Bierce, recalled leaving together with him the funeral of a mutual friend—the sort of scene that leaves a cynic misty-eyed:

> *His conversation to and from the crematory was superb*—a long series of gruesome but highly amusing witticisms. He had tales to tell of crematories that had caught fire and singed the mourners, of dead bibuli whose mortal remains had exploded, of widows guarding the fire all night to make sure that their dead husbands did not escape. The gentleman whose carcass we were burning had been a literary critic. Bierce suggested that his ashes be molded into bullets and shot at publishers, that they be presented to the library of the New York Lodge of Elks, that they be mailed anonymously to Ella Wheeler Wilcox . . . "

(Wilcox was to the late nineteenth century what Danielle Steel is to the late twentieth. She is best remembered for her couplet: "Laugh and the world laughs with you / weep and you weep alone." Now, that's cynical.)

One final thing must be said: Because the cynic expects so little of his fellow man, the purest cynicism often coexists with the sweetest disposition. The true cynic is perpetually delighted, as happy when he is proved wrong by the exception as when he is proved right by the rule. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

GETTING ORGANIZED

By Fred Barnes

Not only is President Clinton copying Ronald Reagan's marketing strategy for his economic program, he edited his first speech to the nation the way Reagan used to. The text reached Clinton, as he sat with aides in the dining room adjacent to the Oval Office, at 4 p.m. on February 15, five hours before air time. Clinton went at it with a pen, not rewriting but making additions and deletions. To dramatize the context, he added two sentences at the beginning: "This is a momentous time for our nation. We stand at the end of the cold war and on the edge of the twenty-first century." His aides—chief of staff Mack McLarty, communications czar George Stephanopoulos and his deputy David Dreyer, political adviser Paul Begala—injected a few thoughts. (Clinton's chief speechwriter, David Kusnet, was absent, working on Clinton's nationally televised speech to Congress on February 17.) The process took hours.

But that's about all there is to the Clinton-Reagan analogy. The content of Clinton's editing was more like George Bush's. He toned down the speech, particularly the parts zinging his opponents. He removed specific mention of Reagan, Bush and Republicans. He scratched out the phrase "trickle-down economics," a favorite target during the campaign. He aimed to sound presidential. "He's conscious his position and circumstances have changed," an aide said. Not that conscious.

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Clinton still runs late. The final version of the speech wasn't fed into the prompter until nearly 9 p.m., air time. That permitted only one practice delivery. It was taped, then had to be played back at fast forward speed.

Clinton is obsessed with emulating Reagan's style and avoiding the mistakes of Jimmy Carter. This is ironic, because in reality Clinton has acted far more like Carter than Reagan. Clinton's decision to lift the ban on gays in the military matches Carter's amnesty of Vietnam draft-dodgers. His "people's inaugural," including the walk down Pennsylvania Avenue, was straight out of Carter's playbook. So was the emphasis on cutting perks for government bigwigs in Washington. Carter bashed lawyers and doctors. Clinton singled out for attack drug company executives who pursue "profits at the expense of our children." And Clinton's first foray outside Washington, for a presidential "town meeting" in Southfield, Michigan, on February 10, was copied from Carter.

Carter's goal in conducting a town meeting in March 1977 in Clinton, Massachusetts, was to make his presidency different, open and in touch with the people. It turned out to be merely different. Clinton sounded downright Carteresque in Southfield. "I wanted to come out of the White House three weeks to the day after I became president," he said, "because I can see now, after only three weeks, how easy it is for a president to get out of touch, to be caught up in the trappings of Washington and basically to be told by people that nothing needs to be changed or you can't change things."

The town meeting wasn't proposed in the initial planning document for Clinton's early days as president that was worked up during the transition. But Clinton is warm and appealing in town meetings. So after he stumbled in the first two weeks of his presidency, one was scheduled (with the 1990's twist of having questions asked also, via T.V., by folks in Seattle, Miami and Atlanta). Town meetings are risky, since the questioners control the agenda. Clinton was roughed up a bit. But on balance he was pleased, notably because he got to woo Perot voters and identify with someone's pain. Perot's Michigan coordinator asked if he would back a balanced budget amendment. Clinton said no, then ticked off a list of things he will seek: a modified line-item veto, campaign finance reform, lobbying reform, spending cuts to reduce the deficit. The list was plagiarized from Perot's agenda. To a man whose son had been killed for a leather coat, he said, "I thank you for having the courage to come here tonight, with all the pain you must feel." Touching this base was important, a Clinton aide says, because it showed "the president relating to the pain of people's everyday and extraordinary experiences."

Fine, but Reagan wouldn't have been caught dead at a town meeting. And though the February 15 speech, setting the stage for the address to Congress two days later, was a direct swipe from Reagan, the tone was Carteresque. Reagan dwelled on the endless possibilities of America, achievable through largely painless policies. Clinton played up how difficult the job of changing America will be. "Those who've profited from the status quo will oppose the changes we seek—the budget cuts, the revenue increases, the new investment priorities," he said. "Every step of the way they'll oppose it." Pain will be part of the process. "We just have to face the fact that to make the changes our country needs, more Americans must contribute today so that all Americans can do better tomorrow." Clinton's way of promising a brighter future was to argue that the American people will be worse off if they don't pay "the price of change." This may have a realistic ring, but it's not Reaganesque.

Reagan's strategy is such a fetish of Clinton and his aides that soon after Election Day, they acquired all the memos from the Reagan transition in 1980-81. Included was a proposal written by pollster Richard Wirthlin and David Gergen on Reagan's first 100 days in office. It laid out a day-by-day schedule of Reagan's activities, one Reagan wound up following. The Clintonites were impressed, as they were with another Gergen memo advocating the use of all the administration's "assets" in promoting Reagan's economic plan. They've freely lifted from both memos. That wasn't all. Last December, Dreyer, then press secretary to House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, was asked to collect chapters on the Reagan juggernaut from two books, *The Power Game* by Hedrick Smith and *On Bended Knee* by Mark Hertsgaard. Dreyer sent the chapters to Little Rock.

One strength of the Reagan White House, discipline, was initially missing at the Clinton White House, but it may be catching on. The Reaganites were notorious for imposing a "line of the day" on their entire administration. This forced the press to cover what Reagan wanted covered. Since press conferences let the press concentrate on what it wants, Reagan had few. Clinton held none in his first four weeks, but he still failed to keep the press on the Clinton-favorable line of the day. To remedy this, the White House now brings together the press secretaries of Cabinet departments for a daily 10 a.m. conference call. Dee Dee Myers, the White House press secretary, runs the show. She doesn't enforce a single daily line. "They have talking points they fax out," says a participant. The morning after Clinton's first T.V. address, the White House dispatched quotes from the speech to be touted.

Discipline isn't everything. After the T.V. speech, Stephanopoulos and Dreyer went to a party of the Judson Welliver Society, the club of former and current White House speechwriters organized by *New York Times* columnist William Safire. Having barely finished the speech before the 9 p.m. air time, they were a bit sheepish. Dreyer struck up a conversation with William Ewald Jr., a speechwriter for President Eisenhower. Ewald told him a story. When Ike gave a televised speech during the Suez crisis in 1956, aides were ripping pages out of the typewriter and slipping them in at the bottom of the pile of his text—as the president was delivering the speech. Stephanopoulos and Dreyer felt sheepish no more. •

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What to do about a plague.

T.B. OR NOT T.B.?

By Jerome Groopman

Sadly, there is no salubrious Swiss mountain whose magic airs can stem the epidemic of tuberculosis in America. T.B., which not long ago was thought of as a subject for doctoral dissertations in European literature, has emerged as a pressing public health threat with no easy medical or social solution.

Until recently the public health community in the United States perceived tuberculosis as a vanishing problem. Although the World Health Organization estimates that one-third of the world's population, or nearly 2 billion people, carry the tubercle bacillus organism and about 20 million people have active cases of T.B., the disease was on its way to being eradicated here due to the success of programs instituted after the Second World War. The discovery of potent anti-tuberculosis drugs cured patients with overt illness and prevented the development of active disease in people recently infected. The number of Americans with active tuberculosis rapidly diminished, and the various institutions built to combat tuberculosis—specifically sanitariums, public health clinics and laboratory research programs—were dismantled.

This complacency has now been shattered. Data from the last five years reveal an increase of more than 20 percent in cases of active tuberculosis. The number of people with dormant cases of T.B. is also on the rise. Today there are 10 million to 15 million people who carry the organism. Most threatening has been the emergence of strains of T.B. resistant to all known antibiotics.

The resurgence of T.B. is due in large part to the increase in homeless and often mentally ill people living on the streets or in shelters, the influx of immigrants from areas where tuberculosis is endemic and the advent of AIDS. The disease is highly contagious, especially in poorly ventilated buildings and in places where people may be repeatedly exposed. A cough or a sneeze by someone actively infected may be all it takes. Not surprisingly, the inner cities have become perfect incubators for T.B. But the inner-city poor are not the only people at risk. An increasing number of reports indicate that people with no clear exposure or medical or sociological predisposition are contracting active T.B. A recent article in *The New York Times* noted that a shipyard worker in rural Maine infected 417 coworkers.

The difficulty in combating T.B. is compounded by the breakdown of health care and patient cooperation among the groups at greatest risk. Effective treatment of tuberculosis requires several antibiotics taken daily without interruption; yet a 1991 study at Harlem Hospital in New York revealed that only 10 percent of patients discharged with anti-tuberculous medications continued to take them regularly after they left the hospital. This is an especially serious problem because intermittent use of anti-T.B. medication allows the disease to build tolerance for the drugs, leading to strains that are "multidrug resistant." Seventy to 90 percent of people with multidrug resistant T.B. die in four to sixteen weeks. The only treatment for patients with these strains is complete isolation and treatment with experimental antibiotics whose efficacy has not been proved.

Within hospitals themselves, the number of T.B. infections is also growing. A forthcoming survey conducted by a major hospital center in New York reports that in the course of a year, one-third of the interns in the hospital contracted T.B. infections. And although new infections can generally be treated with antibiotics, hospitals have reported cases of multidrug resistant tuberculosis and at least eleven deaths among health care workers. A 1992 study released by the United Hospital Fund found that in 1990 and 1991, eighty-two cases of multidrug resistant T.B. reported in New York hospitals were identified as probably having been contracted within the hospitals. A similar situation exists in New York prisons. According to the same report, "Approximately 24 percent of all inmates are positive. Approximately 120 to 150 inmates are treated for tuberculosis at any given time."

The risk of random T.B. transmission raises the question of whether active T.B. carriers who refuse to take medication should be quarantined until their disease is cured. Similar proposals were made in the early days of AIDS and were rejected. But there is no valid comparison between the two diseases. AIDS is a viral disease, but it is not spread by the air and is not contagious to the general population. Proposals to quarantine HIV carriers reflected the xenophobia and homophobia of ignorant policy-makers in the United States and abroad, rather than sensible health care policy. And though it was effectively argued down, the debate resulted in a backlash against the concept of quarantine for infectious diseases.

Public health committees at both the national and state levels have issued a flurry of reports on tuberculosis in the past year. They are long on problem lists but short on detailed solutions. Primarily they document the sharp resurgence of the disease, ascribe the problem to the social blight of the urban poor and usually reject the idea of quarantine for non-compliant patients. The report of the community-based New York City Tuberculosis Working Group, for example, concludes:

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> The current crisis reflects more than the failures of long-neglected service systems. It exemplifies the city's lack of vision. By attempting to scapegoat as "non-compliant" persons who lack the basic necessities of life, rather than confront the systemic failures that make the prospect of compliance illusory for many thousands of New Yorkers, public policy-makers merely perpetuate the neglect and denial that have produced the resurgence in T.B. . . . It is unethical, illegal and bad public health policy to detain "non-compliant" persons before making concerted efforts to address the numerous systemic deficiencies that make adherence to treatment virtually impossible for many New Yorkers.

But the sad reality is that the "systemic deficiencies" of New York will not be remedied in time to contain the spread of T.B.; and even a streamlined health care system cannot enforce compliance among patients who are psychologically unable or socially irresponsible. In cases of a randomly spread, highly contagious disease, the safety of the general population must overrule individual civil rights when the infectious person poses a major threat to his family, friends, co-workers and fellow passengers on the subway. In such cases, quarantine of the contagious person is necessary.

Of course, developing a quarantine program presents myriad complications. Physicians would have to secure court orders to quarantine patients and prove that the patient is unlikely to take medication on his own. And even if a court does find that the patient poses a risk to others, there is still the ethical question of whether a physician or the government should force treatment on a quarantined patient who does not want it.

And a quarantine would not be cheap. The city or state would have to build specially ventilated facilities or renovate existing buildings. Many patients may require months of treatment in quarantine. It is not at all clear who would pay either for the treatment centers or for the treatment itself.

But the alternative to a quarantine may be more costly still. Based on the rising rate of infection documented so far, it is nearly certain that unless uncooperative patients with active disease are quarantined, the number of future cases will rise exponentially.

Some health care analysts suggest that a quarantine can be avoided by arranging for public health nurses to make daily trips to the homes of potentially uncooperative T.B. patients to administer medication. The program, known as "directly observed therapy," or DOT, is indeed the only intervention short of massive quarantine that will limit the spread of T.B. But the number of health care workers needed to make the DOT strategy work in a large city would be daunting. As a practical matter, it would be very difficult to track down every person with tuberculosis in a city like New York. Despite DOT's efforts, some uncooperative T.B. carriers, particularly people who live on the streets, abuse drugs, shift residences or are illegal immigrants leery of contact with government agencies, will require quarantine.

It is no longer enough for advisory committees and public health boards merely to reiterate that the re-emergence of T.B. reflects the breakdown of health and social conditions in our cities and to put civil liberties concerns automatically before public health. Quarantine, even for the most recalcitrant patients, is a harsh measure. But as difficult social policy decisions go, this one is relatively clear-cut.

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Patriotism vs. eros.

LOVE FIELD

By Paul W. Kahn

The military's resistance to lifting the ban on homosexuals has many sources: a belief in the immorality of homosexuality, a concern about "morale," even a fear of AIDS. These reasons are easy to discredit. Nevertheless, many people continue to have reservations about lifting the ban. If we are to understand why, we must consider some aspects of ourselves and of our culture that most people—especially in the military—have difficulty discussing. Specifically, we must acknowledge the role of love in forming the self and sustaining the state.

The debate over gay service should be seen as rooted in a conflict between the highest and most serious values and aspirations of our culture. It is a debate not about "lifestyles" but about the conflicting forms and expressions of love. At this level, it is the same debate that we are having about the introduction of women into combat roles. In both cases, the military has reason to worry about the introduction of a wholly virtuous form of private love—the love that founds the family—into the domain of public love, which characterizes the field of battle.

The idea that the maintenance of the armed forces requires the active management of love has been around for some time. Plato's *Republic* focuses much of its attention on the erotic character of the guardian class. The investment of a violent power in a class of citizens may be necessary to protect the state from enemies, but it also poses a threat to the political order of the whole and to the well-being of each citizen. How, Plato asks, can we create guardians who will serve us rather than force us to serve them? And how can we create a military in which each will serve every other rather than only his or her own interests?

Plato's answer is love: each guardian must love what every other guardian loves, and all must love the city. Plato sees that this common, public love is most threat-

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ened by the introduction of private erotic relations among guardians. The guardians must not be allowed to have ordinary private families. Accordingly he dwells on elaborate techniques for managing their erotic life—including sexual union and the production and raising of children. Unregulated, the relationship to loved ones would lead to a private, individualistic love that would threaten the order of the ideal city.

Although much that Plato says about the management of love seems strained today, his basic insight remains important. The state *is* held together by a kind of love. That love is most at issue in the management of the military. Instead of "love," we speak of "patriotism." But this is nothing other than the emotional attachment of each citizen to every other and of all to the public order. Plato warns us that between the love of the state and the love of the family there are likely to be deep tensions. Plato's point is that we must consider the military from the perspective of an economy of love. Only from that perspective does the introduction of gays into the military appear problematic in any serious way.

The military's goal is to create a wholly public space that excludes the private individual. It is a space in which all the elements are identical or interchangeable: there are no unique privileges, no qualitative differences. Each soldier looks at the others and sees only the self. Only this identification of each with all the others can sustain the willingness to sacrifice life for the unknown other.

When the members of the armed forces worry about homosexuality within the military, the real concern is the threat sexual love poses to the non-sexual love upon which the military is based. Sexual love differentiates. It places one body above all others. To love sexually is not to love everyone. We are each willing to make unique sacrifices for our loved ones—spouses, partners or children. The armed services are the domain of a non-sexual love that expresses the unity of each with every other. This is apparent in the organization of physical space: the "lack of privacy" within the armed services, uniforms and serial numbers are all symbols of the disappearance of the private individual. If women and gays represent a threat to the military, it is the threat of private love to the domain of public love.

Service in the armed forces has not been, traditionally, a mere job. A job is a means to private ends defined by the individual. No mere job has the authority to demand a life. To be a soldier is to give expression to the state as an end in itself. Patriotism is not valuable because it contributes to some other useful end. When the state is no longer seen as such a final end, when it fails to evoke patriotic love, armies tend to collapse.

The experience of this public love makes understandable the way in which military service, despite its harshness, danger and violence, often serves throughout life as a defining experience. Memory of military service marks a possibility of meaning within what is often the alienating force of the modern state.

Family and state are pursuing the same end of creating a meaningful world. In each case, meaning depends on love. And, in each case, love overcomes the inevitable limits of the self. But their similar ends do not make them easily compatible. Plato speculated that even if it were possible to create the ideal city, with its ideal public guardians, ultimately the erotic character of the family—private love—would lead to the city's downfall. We want both the "selfless" public love of all and the "selfish" private love of the unique other. It may not be possible to have both. We have to make choices, both as individuals and as a society.

The border between public and private love was maintained in the past by the division of sexual function. The exclusion of women from the army served, in part, as an exclusion of private love from the army's public space. The introduction of homosexuals into the armed services threatens this same boundary. Both exclusions have had high costs. But unlike the exclusion of blacks in an earlier era, we should not think that these exclusions are simply "mistakes" that can be corrected by a proper understanding of equality.

Two deep questions are raised by President Clinton's proposal. First, is the love of country and comrade so powerful a force that it will simply overwhelm any potential for private love within the military? There is, after all, no reason to believe that gays will not respond just as men always have to the powerful, selfless love of the military ideal. Perhaps a more representative military will actually serve as a counterforce to the increasing tendency to view military life as merely another form of employment.

To introduce the possibility of a private form of love into the military is not to concede its overwhelming power. Christianity, after all, survived the introduction of marriage into the priesthood, even if it did not survive in a single form. Yet Plato warned us that erotic life is not easily managed. Love is a powerful force; managing it may require draconian measures.

Second, what is the realistic form of the military in the twenty-first century? Will military service be so changed by modern technology and modern ideas of the liberal state in a world community that it will simply become another form of employment through which individuals maintain their private families? Much of the military has already reached this point. Surely Clinton is right to see the vast unfairness in excluding any qualified individual from these opportunities.

But beyond that military bureaucracy, in the center of the violent enterprise of killing and being killed for the state, we simply don't know whether an army perceived as a career and not a vocation can sustain the modern state. Whether the disappearance of military virtue—and the public love that sustains it—is a cause for despair or celebration is what is really at issue in our current debate.

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Clinton's best choice.

BABBITT'S FEAST

By Jacob Weisberg

Not all the members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee were glad to see Bruce Babbitt at his confirmation hearing. Before President Clinton named him secretary of the interior, Babbitt presided over the League of Conservation Voters, an enviro group that combats the committee's advocates for Western ranching, mining and energy interests. In 1992 the league rated the committee's chairman, Bennett Johnston of Louisiana, 25 on a scale of 100. Frank Murkowski of Alaska got an eight. Larry Craig of Idaho, Trent Lott of Mississippi, Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, Pete Domenici of New Mexico and Don Nickles of Oklahoma were zeroes. In his introduction to the previous year's ratings, Babbitt wrote, "We must identify our enemies and drive them into oblivion."

The hearings were thus a touchy situation, one to which no politician would look forward—except, perhaps, one with a mischievous streak as wide as Babbitt's. The nominee stood firm with characteristic grace and humor. He said he had no unpublished thoughts, and thanks to Nexis was about to pay the price. He quoted Mo Udall's politician's prayer ("Lord grant me the wisdom to utter gracious and generous remarks today, for tomorrow I may have to eat them"). And when Craig challenged him on the farmer's right to kill coyotes, Babbitt did a bit of cowboy bonding: "When I was growing up on the land and in a ranching environment, we shot anything that moved that was not a cow," he said. "I mean that was just sort of, kind of the ethic of the place. It was best dead, whether it was on wings, whether it was a rattlesnake on the ground, whether it was a predator." He did this dance for two days. The committee passed him 20-0.

Babbitt is a politician who wins the respect of his enemies as well as his friends. He does so by listening well, by arbitrating fairly and by never abandoning hope of persuading even the most primeval cave-dwellers to change their minds. As governor of Arizona, he made a name by negotiating compromises in conflicts deemed insoluble, without sacrificing his own beliefs. Since he emerged as a national figure in the mid-'80s, Babbitt has been a Democratic innovator, constantly pushing the frontier of the sayable in American politics. He's Clinton's best pick, not only because he always seems to have the right idea on issues, from means-testing entitlements to fees for grazing rights, but because of the acuity and dignity he brings to public service.

Babbitt trained as a geologist, but he gave up that career during a field trip to Bolivia in 1961 when he realized, as he has put it, that people were more interesting than rocks. He studied law, worked in the Third World, marched at Selma and fought the war on poverty. After his adventures, Babbitt returned to his ancestral home in Arizona, where he was elected attorney general in 1974, and began prosecuting land fraud and illegal gambling. For his pains, the mob tried to frame him by running up debts in his name at a Vegas casino and putting out a contract on his life.

Babbitt became governor by accident in 1978. The previous governor, Raul Castro, resigned, the lieutenant governor died and Babbitt was next in line. Unexpected though his rise was, he made the most of it, turning Arizona into one of the country's leading "laboratories of democracy," to borrow the title of David Osborne's 1988 book, which praises Babbitt (and his fellow governor Bill Clinton) for his inventive zeal. That Babbitt accomplished anything at all as the Democratic governor of the most Republican state in the union was impressive. That he effected real reforms in health care, education and environmental protection was stunning. Babbitt was willing to offend liberal constituencies such as unions when he called out the National Guard during a bitter copper strike; and he was just as ready to offend industry when he closed a smelter owned by the same copper company for violating air quality standards.

Babbitt's greatest achievement, however, was solving a problem that bedevils most of the West and bores most of the East: water. A desert state, Arizona was running dry in the '70s, thanks to urban growth and agricultural irrigation. A state commission that included all the factions in the complex dispute worked on the problem for two years and came to a complete deadlock, at which point Babbitt was called in. He mediated relentlessly for six months and emerged with a 200-page law based on the novel premise that water rights should be sold for market value. The settlement, which passed the legislature without amendment, became a model of its kind. It's the source of the Babbitt legend, about the negotiator who locks the doors, takes away the doughnuts and wears the obstinate down with sweet reason.

Babbitt's 1988 run for president was a cheerfully quixotic endeavor. He showed that a dark horse doesn't have to be an enraged zealot like Jerry Brown or a sanctimonious schoolmaster like Paul Tsongas. Babbitt the candidate had a self-deprecating wit, a new solution to everything and an instinctual courage. He was the only candidate to talk about how to cut the deficit, proposing a national consumption tax and his best-known idea, needs-testing. Babbitt proposed to do this not just to Social Security (his old scheme, subjecting 85 percent of benefits for those earning more than $25,000 to taxation, is now Clinton's) but to all entitlements,

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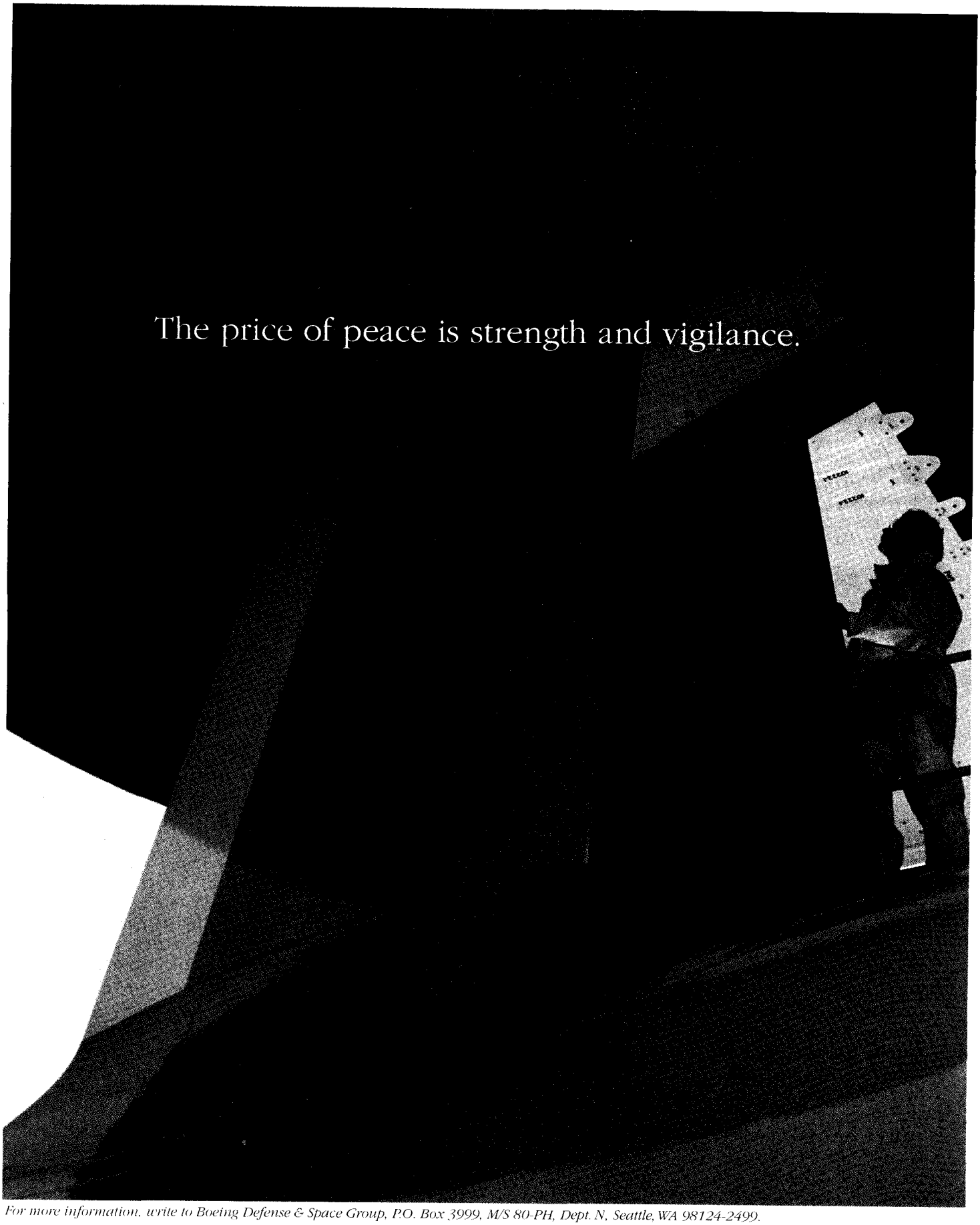

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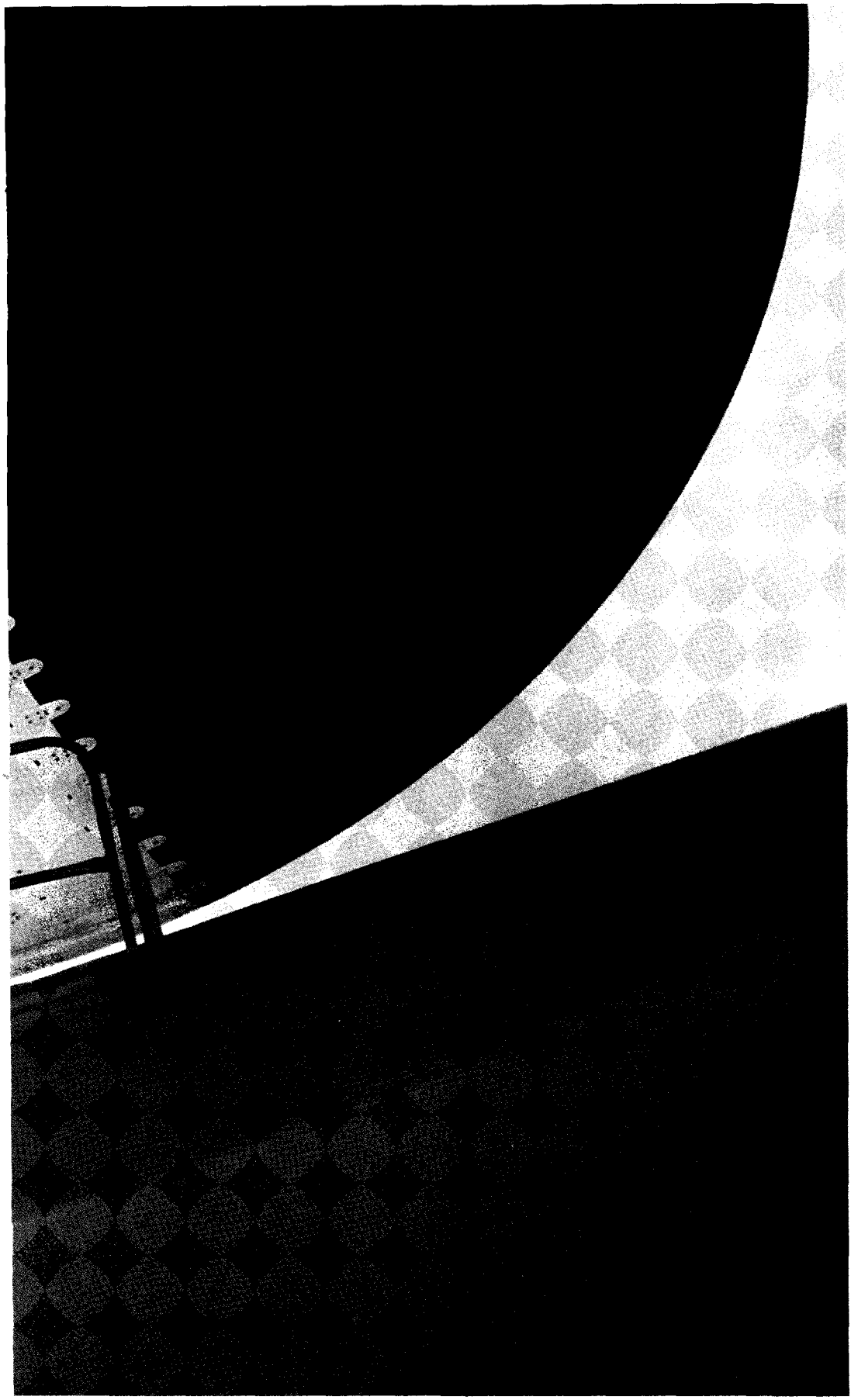

Peace-time reductions in America's military strength this century have been followed by wars for which we were largely unprepared. One conclusion that can be drawn from that historical record is that strength, patience and sacrifice can help keep the peace. That's one reason why Boeing continues to support America's armed forces. Another is that, if it becomes necessary to send America's sons and daughters into harm's way in the future, we owe them our best and fullest support. As the nation's defense forces are scaled back, Boeing is responding appropriately. We will remain a reliable partner for America's armed forces. And we intend to stay near the leading edge of defense-related technology, ready for swift response when needed.

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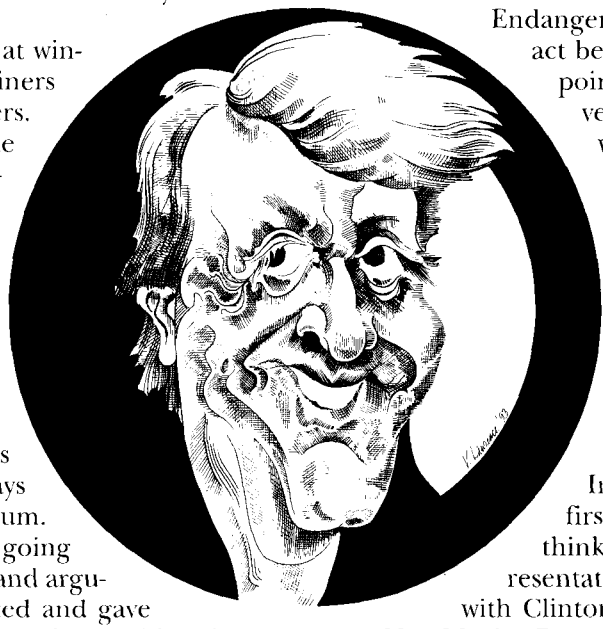
including farm subsidies and the mortgage interest deduction.

The campaign was also radically open. Babbitt let reporters accompany him everywhere, even when he made fund-raising calls, an activity he detested. Most couldn't keep up with him as he hiked, biked and skied across the country on outings that were "like the Bataan death march without the charm," as Duane Garrett, his '88 national chairman, puts it. When Babbitt and his wife, Hattie (recently named ambassador to the Organization of American States), cycled across Iowa in 1986, they stopped for an interview with Ken Bode, who was following them for the "Today" show. While they were waiting to go live, a microphone caught Babbitt whispering, "Hattie, I'm horny." Bode later played the tape at an off-the-record reporters' dinner for Babbitt. The candidate blushed purple, Bode remembers. But he was ready with a comeback: "At least it was my wife."



To be sure, Babbitt is better at winning over reporters with one-liners than he is at wooing voters. Staffers still joke about his trade proposal, "multilateral balancing," which few people ever understood well enough to know whether it made sense. Babbitt is also aloof; though he grasped the need for populist rhetoric in the campaign, it required a degree of disingenuousness that was alien to him. "He's not great at politics per se, the way Clinton is," says Elaine Kamarck, another '88 alum. "He's great at issues. He loved going into the Republican legislature and arguing until they were all exhausted and gave up." One reason Babbitt will never be president is that he hates telling people what they want to hear.

The eyes of many Easterners glaze over when the Department of Interior comes up, but its issues are not at all boring. They are basic questions about the balance between protecting and exploiting the environment, about distributing scarce resources and about how to use the land. It is a field ripe for reform: under an 1872 law, for example, if you find gold on federal property, you can mine it for as little as $2.50 an acre without paying royalties to the government. Wealthy ranchers enjoy subsidized grazing and water rights that result in ecological degradation as well as losses to the Treasury.

Interior is also, as Babbitt explained in an interview last week, often pitted against itself. In the spotted owl controversy in the Pacific Northwest, the Forest Service is battling the Fish and Wildlife Service even though both are part of the same department. Disputes have festered through twelve years of Republican neglect. "I feel like I'm in a great environmental candy store," says Babbitt. "There are undone tasks, issues that have been ignored everywhere I turn."

Babbitt's broadest challenge is changing the notion underlying the use of public lands. The reigning idea is "multiple use," which charges Interior with opening its properties to all forms of exploitation, from logging to cattle grazing to snowmobiling. Babbitt says this won't work; he'd replace multiple use with a doctrine he calls "dominant public use," which puts environmental stewardship first. "Multiple use," he has said, "skirts the reality that in the new urbanizing West there is no longer enough space to accommodate every competing use on every section of the public domain." Or, as he simply puts it, "we have to learn to live more lightly on the land."

Babbitt will try to install his new paradigm not by bashing special interests but by inviting compromise. His goal will be to head off conflicts before they calcify. Babbitt blames the spotted owl controversy on passivity at Interior. The key to implementing the Endangered Species Act, he argues, is to act before extinction looms, at which point courts are compelled to intervene, as they did in the Northwest. What's missing, he says, is a sound scientific basis for action. Babbitt wants to begin a biological survey, patterned after the great nineteenth-century geologic survey of the United States. It is, he says, "the essential precondition for dealing thoughtfully with endangered species."

Eager though he sounds, Interior wasn't exactly Babbitt's first choice. He flew to Little Rock thinking he'd be Special Trade Representative. But greens were unhappy with Clinton's original choice for Interior, New Mexico Representative Bill Richardson, whose principal qualification was that he filled a Hispanic quota, and enlisted Al Gore to help them get Babbitt for Interior instead. Friends report that Babbitt was looking forward to a new challenge—he doesn't want to be a "prisoner of his résumé," in the words of one supporter—but he didn't stay miffed for long. "People ask me if I would rather have been trade representative," he says. "My answer, after two weeks here, is no."

At 54, Babbitt is, as *Washington Monthly* editor Charlie Peters puts it, a "wise old head," whose advice Clinton would do well to seek on matters unrelated to his official duties. He might be a kind of counselor-at-large, as his predecessor Harold Ickes was to FDR. Babbitt could do just about any job in the Cabinet, and he'll be a logical choice to fill in anywhere Clinton runs into trouble. I expect he will do a brilliant job, then move on. Babbitt has already told Clinton the bad news about what will happen if he stays at Interior: his environmentalism will lose the Democrats the Rockies in 1996. Clinton blanched before Babbitt told him there was good news too. He was sure to lock up California. •

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POETIC JUSTICE

By Jeffrey Rosen

"Have you read Proust?" Justice Souter asked near the beginning of my interview for a clerkship last March. We were talking about Henry Adams, the subject of my college thesis, and so the question was unexpected. I hadn't gotten very far, I confessed; but Justice Souter was sympathetic. "I failed, too, when I tried the first time. But then I read him in a gulp one August, and was struck by the cumulative effect of the prose." Suddenly he smiled. "If I could take a year off from this job, I'd like nothing better than to go to a small college and teach a comparative seminar on Adams and Proust. The similarities are remarkable." Quoting from memory, he then recited the last sentence of *The Education of Henry Adams*: "Perhaps some day,—say 1938, their centenary,—[Adams and his friends] might be permitted to return together for a holiday ... and perhaps then, for the first time since man began his education among the carnivores, they would find a world that sensitive and timid natures could regard without a shudder."

Souter's affinity for Adams and Proust reveals qualities at the core of the man and his jurisprudence. (When I wrote to Souter, asking permission to describe our conversation in this article, he wrote back: "I have no objection to your saying something about my fantasy of teaching an Adams-Proust course"; he then repeated his original conceit about Proust: "If you can spare the time, read it in a gulp.") For the resemblances between Adams, the aesthetic Puritan, and Proust, the bed-ridden aesthete, are veiled but intense. There is a thin-spun quality to both men: both were concerned with the philosophical uses of timidity and felt free to exercise their power by hiding it behind a carefully constructed appearance of fragility. Both lived as hermits in the city, drawn to society but holding themselves apart from it. By cultivating some of the same qualities, Souter has endeared himself to his clerks, friends and colleagues, and has become increasingly influential on the Court. But his emerging jurisprudence of "passive virtues" is far less passive than it appears.

It is not hard to understand Souter's identification with Adams, who was born in 1838 but who claimed to have received an eighteenth-century education that failed to prepare him for the brutal "multiplicity" of the twentieth century. Souter was also derided as an "eighteenth-century man" during his confirmation hearings; and his quaint horror of modernity has been much remarked upon. He has never used a computer and instead drafts letters and opinions in an elegant, spindly hand, with a black rollerball. He has a weakness for eighteenth-century diction—preferring "enquiry" to "inquiry," for example. Although he appreciates good writing, his own is remarkably turgid. ("Time for me to put some lead in it," he joked after a clerk gave him a particularly fluid draft.) When another clerk lent him *Pretty Woman* on video, he was unable to watch it because he has no VCR at home and couldn't figure out how to use the one at the Court. One of his most up-to-date appliances is the fifteen-year-old turntable on which he listens to L.P.s of his favorite composer, Johann Sebastian Bach.

But with Souter, as with Adams, the eighteenth-century manikin is a literary conceit that obscures more than it reveals. You do not progress from Harvard to Oxford to the pinnacle of New Hampshire politics to a position of leadership on the Supreme Court by being *radically* out of step with your time. Justice Harry Blackmun deserves to be taken seriously when he told a Minneapolis Judicial Conference last summer that Souter "may be the only normal person on the Supreme Court." What makes Souter "normal" is the appealing ways his diffidence has been harmonized with his ambition. On the Court, as in New Hampshire, his exquisite manners, self-abnegating modesty and palpable concern for his colleagues and subordinates have continued to support his ascent.

The manners are obvious to all visitors to Souter's chambers. Clerks insist that he treats everyone, from messengers to the president of the United States, with the same easy respect. The unpretentious courtesy extends to his style in chambers and at oral argument, which one clerk compared to that of William Shawn. "When I read those tributes to Shawn, describing how he teased out your half-baked ideas and made you feel as if you'd come up with a fully formed argument, I thought of Souter discussing a case."

Souter also has a whimsical, if weirdly garrulous,

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sense of humor that he sometimes shares with his clerks. One clerk, for example—call him Smith—had a habit of rifling through Souter's junk mail and aimlessly scribbling jokes. Souter laid a trap for him by dictating a letter and placing it in an envelope he knew Smith would open:

> Having a tough time keeping up with the News?
> The reason may be postal theft.
> Do you suspect an employee of ransacking the mail for important periodicals addressed to you? Are your magazines being stolen by someone you trusted?
> Don't get mad. Get SAD! Yes, Get [Smith's] Annotated Digest! Every week, [Smith's] Annotated Digest of Stolen Periodical Literature (or SAD, to a growing cult of victimized insiders) will give you a peek at what you've been missing. And then some!...

This goes on for a page.

In addition to other private virtues (such as his habit of visiting the sick), Souter's most endearing quality is his lack of self-importance. Unlike Anthony Kennedy, who has a passion for going to embassy banquets, Souter shows little interest in the trappings of office. Instead, he is passionately loyal to a close circle of friends, including Warren Rudman, Tom Rath and the ten or so members of the Daryrumple Society, an eating club he started as a Harvard undergraduate at Lowell House. He asks former clerks to call him "David."

At times, Souter's diffidence seems extreme. He jogs most nights at Fort McNair, and once the sentry failed to recognize him. Instead of identifying himself, Souter meekly jogged home and asked Rudman the next day if he knew of another place to jog, since "private citizens" were no longer allowed to use the base. Without telling Souter, Rudman called the Pentagon, which immediately called Souter to apologize. The next night, when Souter jogged up to the gate, he was greeted by an honor guard.

But Souter's self-effacing modesty should not be mistaken for insecurity. On the contrary, it reflects—and usefully conceals—an unflappable self-confidence. Unlike Blackmun, who agonizes endlessly over decisions and has his clerks write exhaustive summaries of the briefs, Souter takes his own extensive notes and does not appear to have second thoughts. Unlike Clarence Thomas, whose intellectual insecurity leads him to hire only the most virulent conservative ideologues as clerks, Souter enjoys being challenged by liberals. Unlike Sandra Day O'Connor, who can get rattled by Scalia's bullying, Souter is amused by what he calls "Nino blowing off steam." Last June, for example, when Scalia ranted at Souter for following two inconsistent decisions by John Marshall, Souter replied, deadpan: "The dissent accuses us of repeating what it announces as Chief Justice Marshall's misunderstanding ... of his own previous opinion. We are honored."

Souter, in short, is a very nice man; and his unthreatening confidence has helped him to become a mediator and conciliator between the competing factions on the Court—from Justice William Brennan, whose long hug of welcome Souter described with unembarrassed warmth at the Harvard Club in October, to Scalia, who brought him a portrait of an obscure New Hampshire justice as a token of friendship. But though a very nice justice, Souter cannot yet be called a great justice. In fact, the qualities that are admirable in his character—self-confidence masked by diffidence—are less admirable in his jurisprudence. For Souter is increasingly allying himself with a judicial tradition that cloaks its assertiveness in a tendentious rhetoric of restraint.

"He has a vision of the Court as a moderating influence," says his friend Rath, "to serve as a unifying part of the country, between the more partisan executive and legislative branches. I think there is a central core of David Souter that sees the Court as a conciliator and legitimizer, bringing society together." Rath claims that Souter has shared this vision with his friends ever since he was a judge in New Hampshire. But Souter's moderating vision is hardly a modest vision. On the contrary, it builds on a grandiose view of judges associated, most prominently, with two disciples of Felix Frankfurter: Justice John Harlan and Alexander Bickel of Yale.

There is a cult of Harlan among conservatives and liberals on the Court today, and Souter is jockeying for high priest. (At his confirmation hearings, Souter called Harlan his judicial hero.) In the abortion decision last July, *Casey* v. *Planned Parenthood*, Harlan's name was invoked no fewer than ten times, by the majority *and* the dissents. But Harlan's reputation as a judicious moderate is ripe for re-examination. In a recent issue of the *New York Law School Law Review* devoted to Harlan's centennial, Bruce Ackerman of Yale, a former Harlan clerk, shows how Harlan's jurisprudence exalted judges in the name of restraint. Claiming a special ability to discern the unwritten "traditions" of Anglo-American people stretching back to the mists of Runnymede, Harlan had a tendency to dilute rights explicitly enumerated in the American Constitution, to invent rights that were not and to balance the interests of the individual and society guided by little more than his own sense of fair play.

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Bickel has similar flaws. In *The Least Dangerous Branch*, Bickel anticipated Souter's argument that the Supreme Court is "a legitimizing force in society." Since "neither force nor will" supports its decrees, Bickel said, the Court should be guided by "the passive virtues," going to great lengths to avoid making decisions that the political branches and the people are unlikely to accept. Bickel's passive-aggressive vision, much of it worked out in these pages, has not worn entirely well. As Gerald Gunther of Stanford has noted, under the guise of self-abnegation Bickel demanded essentially unfettered personal discretion for judges to decide whether or not they thought it prudent to enforce the Constitution's commands.

The influence of Harlan and Bickel converges in Souter's most grandiose opinion, his contribution to the abortion case. To overrule *Roe* v. *Wade* "under fire," Souter wrote, would be seen as a "surrender to political pressure," undermining the Court's legitimacy; and "if the Court's legitimacy should be undermined, then so would the country be in its very ability to see itself through its constitutional ideals." The circularity of the logic is exquisite. It was *Roe*'s failure to make persuasive constitutional arguments that made the Court look political and illegitimate to begin with; and by reaffirming the result without defending the reasoning, Souter's opinion appears more quintessentially political than *Roe* itself. (It is also difficult to make sense of a theory of precedent that feels free to jettison *Roe*'s trimester system, which many considered the heart of the decision, and to overturn at least two other decisions concerning waiting periods and parental notification, all in the name of continuity.)

Casey is the archetype of Souter's least convincing opinions: he tends to be most arbitrary when he tries to be most pragmatic. In *Walter Nixon* v. *U.S.*, decided in January, Souter agreed that the Senate has broad discretion over the mechanics of impeachment. But instead of focusing on the text and history of the impeachment clauses, he quoted Bickel on the importance of not embarrassing the political branches. Vaguely suggesting that some impeachment proceedings might justify more searching review, Souter refused to say precisely when or why. The gist of his breezy concurrence: an impeachment is constitutional unless I think it isn't.

Finally, in *Barnes* v. *Glen Theater*, Souter properly distanced himself from Chief Justice William Rehnquist's coarse suggestion that moral disapproval alone might be enough to ban nude dancing. But Souter voted to uphold the ban anyway, because he thought it conceivable that nude dancing might produce "pernicious secondary effects," such as prostitution and sexual assault. There was no evidence to support this odd theory, however, since it had not occurred to any of the parties. "Pasties and a G-string moderate the expression to some degree, to be sure, but only to a degree," Souter concluded. This is the opinion of a man who has not spent much time in topless bars; and it is a personal opinion, not a principled one.

If all of Souter's opinions were devoted to balancing, conciliating and splitting differences, then he would be scarcely more interesting than Lewis Powell, a less colorful Harlan clone. But Souter is often much more interesting. He can be, when he chooses, a sensitive and rigorous interpreter of text and history, and is one of the few justices engaged enough to challenge Scalia on his own terms. In *Lee* v. *Weisman*, the school prayer case, Souter's account of the original understanding of the religion clauses was more persuasive than Scalia's (see "The Leader of the Opposition," TNR, January 18). And a few weeks ago Souter again beat Scalia at his own game in the Operation Rescue case. Scalia concluded that a Civil War statute did not prevent Operation Rescue from barricading abortion clinics because there was no evidence that the protesters had a "discriminatory animus" against women. Souter pointed out that the "discriminatory animus" requirement appears nowhere in the text of the law, but was invented by the Burger Court. By parsing another part of the law that Scalia had ignored, Souter proposed an alternative way of protecting the women and punishing the protesters.

The greatest virtue of Souter's emerging jurisprudence, however, is its candor. In statutory interpretation, Souter is scrupulous about explaining the cannons of interpretation that guide his decisions and, when he chooses to depart from them, explaining why. When he performs his balancing acts in constitutional interpretation, at least he takes care to divulge the considerations he has balanced. Even Souter's abortion decision, for all its flaws, is startlingly—almost excessively—frank. In the November issue of the *Harvard Law Review*, Kathleen Sullivan of Harvard argues that judicial formalists are often no less arbitrary than judicial pragmatists, prejudging the outcome of cases by the categories they choose to impose. Perhaps the most that can be expected of the heirs of Frankfurter, in the end, is full disclosure.

Given Souter's self-confidence, honesty and intellectual engagement, he has the potential to become a very good justice, or possibly even a great one. If he "grows," as he is likely to do, he will grow more subtly than Blackmun, whose votes simply became less predictably conservative and more predictably liberal. Perhaps Souter's decisions instead will become less result-oriented, less subjective and more deeply rooted in text and history. And there is a purely aesthetic value to the unity between the man and his jurisprudence that Souter has started meticulously to construct. Like Adams and Proust, who searched for artistic and philosophical unity by writing spiritual autobiography, Justice Souter seems to be struggling, in his own, more modest way, to justify himself. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Same, Only Different

In 1908 an American film critic wrote: "First, let us classify the film product of the world as American and foreign." The classification still applies—never more patently than when we get an American remake of a foreign film and can see the attempt to obliterate the difference.

Lately we've had a spurt of such attempts. *Scent of a Woman* derives from *Profumo di Donna*, an Italian picture of 1974 with Vittorio Gassman. I didn't see the Gassman film, so I can't say whether I'd have liked the Pacino film even less—I doubt that it could have been more—with the original in mind. But I've seen the originals of two other recent remakes, and in both cases the originals severely shade the new versions.

Sommersby (Warner Bros.) reworks *The Return of Martin Guerre*, a 1982 French film based on historical records. (A new musical based on the same material has just been produced in a Hartford, Connecticut, theater.) That picture, with a screenplay by Jean-Claude Carrière and Daniel Vigne, took place in sixteenth-century France and dealt with a peasant who abandoned his pregnant wife and who returned after eight years. The new version, with a screenplay by Nicholas Meyer and Sarah Kernochan, is transposed to Virginia just after the Civil War. A Confederate officer, Jack Sommersby, returns to his wife and son to take up life again on the family plantation after a long absence in the war. As in *Martin Guerre*, serious doubts soon arise about the authenticity of the returnee. Is he an impostor?

Well, in *Sommersby* he's an impostor right from the start—because of Richard Gere's presence in the role. Sommersby is meant to be a complex, somewhat romantic figure, steeped in gallantry, deep in secrets, noble in intent. Gere comes off as a present-day, thin-blooded actor wearing costumes. He has sometimes done well in ultramodern parts (*American Gigolo, Breathless*, which was another remake), but in large-scale historical roles (*King David* and this picture) Gere is more ambitious than sound.

In the original the wife was played by Nathalie Baye, an actress of no huge power but of real substance. Here—the role is quite different; I'm comparing talents responding to different demands—the wife is Jodie Foster, who has gone a long way on relatively little. Her razor-line mouth, her gaunt cheeks, her dormant eyes give her a face that seems to resent the intrusion of emotion. Like Gere, she fares better in contemporary stuff, though her garlanded performance as a rape victim in *The Accused* was more facile acting-class hysteria than genuine accomplishment. In *Sommersby* she seems ill at ease, uncommanding, in a role that calls for dramatic stature and ultimately for a dash of the heroic.

Gere and Foster don't help each other much, especially in the love scenes. No fire is struck between them. The re-establishment (as it's thought to be at first) of intimacy, the gradual heating-up, are merely traversed, not exciting. And then there's the conclusion, which calls for Gere to offer a kind of Sydney Carton sacrifice. He seems too small for the action. It's up to Foster to nobly recognize and justify his sacrifice, but she, too, is small.

The cinematographer, Philippe Rousselot, does well—he couldn't ever do less—but he has done better (*Dangerous Liaisons, A River Runs Through It*). The director, Jon Amiel, works hard with landscapes and farm-folks' faces. He obviously remembered that *Martin Guerre* had been praised for its re-creation of sixteenth-century peasant life and he wanted to do the same for post-bellum Virginia. But the screenplay itself undercuts his try for authenticity by, for instance, giving Sommersby a 1990s sympathy for black people.

The Vanishing (20th Century-Fox) is an anomaly among remakes: it was directed by the same person who made the original. A Dutchman, George Sluizer, directed that original in 1988, with a screenplay by Tim Krabbé from his own novel. Result: one of the most intelligent, intriguing and shocking of thrillers. Sluizer is badly hobbled here by Todd Graff's version of the story. Graff's screenplay almost seems intended as an object lesson, an example of how Big Bad Hollywood, mass-minded, grinds up discriminating material and spits it out as pop pulp.

The original was about a Dutchman and his girlfriend who motor into France on vacation: how, at a filling station, she disappears without a trace; how he spends three years trying to find out what happened to her; and how he ultimately does find out, at the hands of the cool pseudo-Nietzschean scientist who

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hoffa. *A treat for those who like eruptive acting (Jack Nicholson) and swift directing (Danny DeVito). An American morality tale etched in acid. (Reviewed 1/18/93)* **Intervista.** *Sheer delight ... well, there's also some pathos and mystery. Federico Fellini weaves a scintillating fabric out of an attempt by some T.V. journalists to interview him. (12/7/92)* **The Oak.** *Romania. 1988. Lucian Pintilie directs a pitch-black comedy about two lovers in Ceausescu-time, with Maia Morgenstern extraordinary as a headstrong dissident. (2/8/93)* **Riff-Raff.** *We join, quite willingly, a rowdy gang of London construction workers, in Ken Loach's funny-gritty comedy-drama. (2/15/93)* **—SK**

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did the first abduction. The remake is set in and around Seattle, which, scenically, is no handicap, but every other possible handicap has been loaded on the script.

I won't itemize the changes (as far as I remember the original). The outline of the story is more or less the same, except for the ending. By mandate of the International Order of Thriller Reviewers, I can't specify details. I can say only that the rewritten finish puts a jolly ending on what Poe called "the most terrific of extremes which has ever fallen to the lot of mere mortality."

More inadequate acting here. I'm certainly not derogating American actors as a group. We have some of the very best screen actors, men and women, now at work; but none of them is in *Sommersby* or this muddled *Vanishing*. Jeff Bridges, now wattled, is bland and dreary as the scientist, even though he has given himself some sort of foreign accent (Sluizer's perhaps?) in a pathetic attempt to make the role interesting.

Kiefer Sutherland, the hero, has sometimes had some flavor, some edge; here he is T.V.-banal. The disappearing girlfriend, Sandra Bullock, is overly winsome. And no actress on earth could make the latter-day girlfriend convincing as she is written here. Nancy Travis, doomed by the role, struggles with it.

"A cold coming we had of it," says one of T. S. Eliot's magi. Sluizer, too. It's been a long hard road for him, a gifted director, to real recognition and success. I was glad to see that he got them with the first version of *The Vanishing*, and I hope they don't vanish with the second. (He also recently directed the lovely looking but feebly written *Utz*, reviewed last week.) Maybe Sluizer has found in proof what he must have known beforehand in theory: the chances for superior work are better when there are fewer zeroes in budgets and in producers' heads. •

The Sense of an Ending

BY ANTHONY GRAFTON

When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture by Paul Boyer

(Harvard University Press, 468 pp., $29.95)

The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism by Ronald Numbers

(Knopf, 458 pp., $27.50)

In 1925 H. L. Mencken covered the first part of the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee. The task gave him endless amusement. He watched William Jennings Bryan overeat and heard Clarence Darrow argue for the prerogatives of science. Mencken always savored tomfoolery, especially when it reached such high points as the moment when Darrow lured Bryan, a three-time presidential candidate, into arguing on the stand that man was not a mammal. But he most enjoyed the radical contrast between the urban sophisticates of Dayton—some of whom staged the Scopes trial not to demonize the teacher but to test the Tennessee law against teaching evolution—and the rural folk who writhed and spoke in tongues at nighttime meetings in the cornfields. Even the majority of Dayton men who cheered for Bryan and whooped for Scopes's blood did not follow the teachings of the "Old-Time Religion" in practice. Sensibly irreligious, they sneaked off whenever possible for a shot of corn liquor mixed with Coca-Cola, ogled young women and engaged in other improving activities. Only the truly ignorant backwoodsmen—and Bryan—actually believed in the literal inspiration of Scripture.

Modernity had reached Tennessee. Mencken knew that the grin of skepticism would triumph over the brays of fanatical morality, even though he left the trial early, wrongly assuming that it would end in the frying of poor Scopes. Instead, Darrow's brilliant cross-examination forced Bryan to make concessions that shocked his followers. Scopes received only a small fine, which he appealed; and Bryan, humiliated and

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exhausted, died in Dayton a few days after the trial ended. Mencken himself admitted, in one rare moment of enthusiasm, that the case proved that fifteen minutes of free speech could destroy dogma and intolerance.

His confidence was misplaced. Survivors of the 1980s have seen biblical literalism revive with an apocalyptic blare of trumpets. Evangelistic television and radio networks, chiliastic books and tapes, have reached millions. Ancient ideas about the end and the beginning, ideas long muted, allegorized or forgotten by most highly educated Americans, have reasserted themselves. Millions—perhaps a majority of the population—think that God created the universe a few thousand years ago and that his son Jesus will come back shortly to end and to judge it. "Armageddon tired of all this history, science, secular humanism"—the cry rings out across the land.

Creationist accounts of biology and the development of the universe have been introduced into school curriculums, normally as an alternative to evolution and geology. Though the federal courts have struck down the state "balanced-treatment laws" that supported this two-model approach in Arkansas and Louisiana, a decision of the Supreme Court in 1987 allowed the voluntary teaching of creationism in schools. Many public school teachers (69 percent in Kentucky, 30 percent in Illinois) have wanted it to be included in the curriculum. Distinguished scientists have been drawn into public debates and lawsuits about the standing of their enterprise—and have not always outargued their opponents.

The American future, which schoolbooks and Fourth of July orations once described as inevitably happy, has proved as malleable as the world's past. In the paneled rooms of the White House, where secularist Wise Men once roamed, fundamentalist ideas and images have shaped national policies. Reagan, Watt and others slipped readily into the language of apocalypse and explained important decisions about the nation's resources and goals by the principle that history would soon come to a stop. The frustration of the fundamentalist program for American politics, the exposure of the Tartuffes of the Christian right, the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of George Bush (no religious radical he) have not dampened the zeal of America's Fifth-Monarchy Men. Instead, calls to repentance and predictions that the end of our 6,000 years of history is upon us have become more audible as their literal fulfillment by nuclear war has become less likely.

Two new books have arrived to explain in some detail how Mencken's qualified faith in modernity was not quite vindicated. Ronald Numbers describes the origins, growth and spread of scientific creationism. *The Creationists* explores intellectual and institutional history to find the origins of the popular American belief that the short history of the human race provided by Genesis matches the evidence of nature better than the theories of historical geology and Darwinian biology. Paul Boyer traces the roots and branches of the rich, strange complex of biblical exegesis and twisted journalism that he calls "prophecy belief." *When Time Shall Be No More* exhaustively describes a strange species of rabid predictions of the wrath to come, in which the scarifying images of Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation are used to condemn communism, liberalism, Social Security and homosexuality.

Both books rest on a deep foundation of research. Numbers has meticulously reconstructed the careers and the relations of the heroes of creationism—men largely unknown in research universities but vastly influential in seminaries, study groups and Sunday schools around the United States. He describes some stunningly clever arguments. Only a heart of stone could fail to appreciate the "creation scientist" who explained the placement of fossils in the layers of the Earth by the differing specific gravities of the creatures involved. These determined the levels at which the Flood left their bodies in the ooze; thus science bears out Genesis, not paleontology.

Numbers's account of *The Genesis Flood*, the best-selling charter of contemporary creationism, written by John C. Whitcomb Jr. and Henry M. Morris in the late 1950s and published as recently as 1961, is both sympathetic and illuminating. He shows a patience that few modern scholars could (and maybe should) muster when confronted by a purportedly scientific treatise that considers at length the size ("equal to eight freight trains with sixty-five stockcars each") and possible survival of Noah's Ark.

More importantly, Numbers shows that the movement is far more varied in composition than Mencken and other observers of its early days realized. Creation scientists come from many social backgrounds—one of the authors of *The Genesis Flood* studied geology and paleontology, as well as history, as a Princeton undergraduate—and belong to both political parties. The fact that the numerous blurbs on the dust jacket of Numbers's book come from both creationists and their opponents suggests the fair-mindedness of his treatments of personalities and episodes.

Boyer looks less closely than Numbers at individuals, though he has some arresting and amusing things to say about Hal Lindsey and other affluent salesmen of doom. But he does a precise and elaborate job of textual analysis, and supports his arguments with many well-chosen quotations. With admirable endurance he has shoveled his way through the heaped slag of dozens of agonizingly repetitive biblical commentaries, which differ fiercely about details so minute that the inexpert reader will find it hard to grasp them. He describes, explicates and reproduces tracts on the Rapture, illustrated novels about the Antichrist, comic books about Armageddon and polemics about midweek millennialism.

Like Numbers, Boyer has a sharp eye for nuance. He makes clear, for example, that eschatology, like creationism, need not serve any single political or social agenda. In different forms it can support or oppose the reform of society, denounce the sins of the Jews or predict the salvation of Israel. He also skillfully discloses the emotions imperfectly revealed by the leaden language of the prophetic writers. The gloating schadenfreude with which Lindsey and his colleagues describe the doom of unbelievers—and the unbanked fires of social and political resentment that inspire them—emerges very clearly from Boyer's analysis of their rhetoric.

Often, indeed, the hatred seems to run much deeper than the hope, as when Christian prophets predict that the Jews will suffer both from Satan's hatred, because they are the Chosen People, and from the Antichrist's vengeance, because they refuse to worship him:

> Blood will flow up to the horses' bridles, and the people of Israel will be right in the midst of the sea of blood, about to be engulfed in it. All the fury of hell will be poured out upon them. Satan has never forgiven them for the fact that ... Christ ... is of Judah's seed, and the Antichrist will be consumed with indignation against them because of their refusal to pay him divine homage.

The millenarian sadism of this example is not isolated, as Boyer documents. Lindsey, who claims to have given well-attended speeches at the American Air War College and the Pentagon, evokes the horrors of the end, when water will turn to blood and poison millions, with gloating good humor: "There's going to be a big run on Coca-Cola, but even this will give out after a while." (This pro-

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vides a useful gloss on what Caspar Weinberger hoped for when he observed, back in 1982, that "I have read the Book of Revelation and yes, I believe the world is going to end—by an act of God, I hope—but every day I think that time is running out.") Like the clever movie *The Rapture*—a hard video to find on weekends, at least in my university town—Boyer's book tells us a lot about American anger.

Both these books share some particularly valuable assets. The authors have mastered the problems and the terminologies of their subjects, and explain them with lucidity and elegance. Anyone who reads Numbers will come away with a firm command of the points that separate day-agers, who take the days of Creation as geological periods, from gap theorists, who try to fit the long periods of geology into what they see as interstices in the biblical narrative—not to mention those that distinguish both groups from the *echt* flood geologists, who shorten the history of the universe to a few thousand years and believe that a universal flood deposited the fossils and arranged the strata of the earth. And anyone who reads Boyer will come away with a solid understanding of the traditions of apocalyptic imagery since antiquity, and a comfortable familiarity with the recent debates between premillennialists, who expect Jesus to return and to carry out judgment before the thousand years of peace and rest that the saints will enjoy, and postmillennialists, who expect the thousand years to precede the Second Coming (and sometimes elide the difference between the capital-M Millennium and a gradual reform of society).

To be sure, the books differ in attitude. Numbers describes himself as an agnostic, but he respects the seriousness and the sophistication of many creationists and their doctrines. This is partly (but only partly) the result of his personal history; he is the son of a Seventh-day Adventist minister who preached against evolution. Boyer, by contrast, can't conceal his amusement at the Sun Belt rococo detailing of some of the prophecies he explains. Some of the prophetic imagery he reproduces—notably a vision of a suburban father, his hand on his lawnmower, looking up in surprise beside his placid ranch house as his wife and child rise to meet the Redeemer—seems to be chosen in a spirit of not-so-gentle mockery.

Still, Numbers and Boyer coincide on the most important point: chronology. Both show that the current American movement toward a literalist reading of biblical history and prophecy began relatively recently. Cyrus Scofield—a one-time Confederate soldier from Tennessee, who drank, had marital problems and went to jail for forgery—synthesized many of the themes of modern fundamentalism in his Reference Bible of 1909. Between 5 million and 10 million copies of that work had been sold by 1967. Millions more of a revised edition have hit the market since. Even Scofield, moreover, did not insist on taking the days of Genesis as literal days, though he rejected evolution. A gap theorist, he allowed the ages of geology to separate the original creation of heavens and earth from that of Adam and Eve in the year determined by Archbishop Ussher, 4004 B.C.

Creationist doctrines hardened over time. The First World War inflamed feelings about evolution, since German war crimes were influentially explained as the natural result of the rise of Social Darwinism and the abandonment of religion. But the Scopes trial proved a debacle, and many early anti-evolution laws collapsed in court tests. It was really only in the 1960s, when federally funded biology textbooks brought evolution into the nation's classrooms, that "creation science" crystallized, and efforts at accommodation were replaced by the insistence that Genesis took precedence over geology.

Millennial prophecy, to be sure, has always been a part of American culture. This, after all, is the land of the *Novus ordo seclorum*, as our dollar bills remind us. But Boyer shows that the violent images and the persistent supernaturalism of modern American prophecies also represent a reaction to the last 100 years or so of history—to the rapidity of modernization in American life, to the brutality of modern warfare, to the rise of threats (and promises) such as the former Soviet Union. In tone and in direction—though not, as we will see, in content—biblical literalism of the American kind is as much a response to modernity as to Darwinism.

For all their sobriety and wit, however, Numbers and Boyer do not fully resolve the larger interpretive issues that their material raises. Numbers argues that creation science shares many identifying qualities with university science. Creationists, he maintains, have been the sharpest critics of other creationists; and the self-policing quality of their work strikingly resembles the self-policing character of modern scientific inquiry. True, some creationists have engaged in gross misprision of evidence, magnified their scientific credentials and distorted their scientific data—which they have often gathered not by

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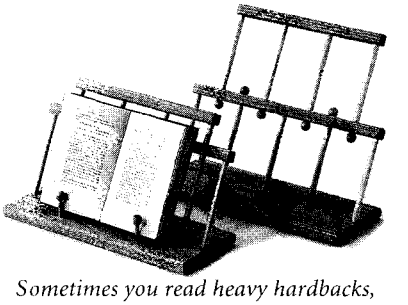

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experiments or on field trips, but by hunting through the written work of others. But Numbers treats these tactics as exceptions to a rule of serious, systematic enquiry. Creationism differs from modern science not because it is silly or irrational (which, I must add, much of it seems to be), but because it happens to rest on different assumptions. The 47 percent of Americans who believe that God created humanity within the last 10,000 years are not lemmings who will follow raving reactionaries over any cliff. Numbers seems to think that creationism is wrong, to be sure—but a wrong sort of science, factually obsolete and disproved like Ptolemaic astronomy, rather than something that is not science at all.

In fact, Numbers's own evidence suggests that the situation is not so pleasingly symmetrical as he thinks. In the first place, his rich story shows that creationism is not quite a coherent phenomenon. Again and again the characters in his drama step out of their supposedly consistent roles and claim precisely the form of authority that, by Numbers's hypothesis, they should deny: the authority of mainstream science. Creationists have long complained that orthodox scientists persecute them, refusing to allow them to earn higher degrees or publish in mainstream journals; but many support their claims to expertise in the study of nature by citing their own orthodox scientific credentials. They thus admit the superior prestige of the very scientific methods that they are supposedly challenging.

Several of the creationists with really solid scientific training, such as Molleurus Couperus and Nicolaas Rupke, have eventually adopted less rigorous positions, or become agnostics. Others who persisted have built on such foundations of sand as the temptingly apocalyptic fantasies of Velikovsky. And the mere fact that creationists have severely criticized the flaws in creation science proves little; for millennia, after all, astrologers have been the most severe critics of (one another's) astrological practice. As Geoffrey Lloyd has shown in his pioneering studies of Greek science, sporadic criticism of rival techniques occurs among the practitioners of many approaches to nature, from sorcery to alchemy. It has nothing in common with the systematic effort to identify and to refute fallacious forms of inference and explanation that has characterized Western science from its inception.

Modern science has many flaws. Its practice is often inconsistent with its principles; individual scientists keep messy notes, claim credit they don't deserve, advance arguments they can't rigorously sustain and promise that complicated applied science projects will work first time out of the box. Scientific priorities are often set by such non-scientific factors as political pressure, congressional pork barreling and the financial support of patrons with their own agendas. The same research programs that dramatize some problems can result in the ignoring of others that may be more serious. But let's face it: science also tells us how and why airplanes fly and computers do things when we turn them on—as its trendiest academic critics tacitly admit when they print out their papers, fax them to commentators and use their frequent flier miles to attend another elegantly situated conference where they will deconstruct the follies of those poor, deluded mathematicians and physicists. And you cannot give a similar operational definition of creation science.

Moreover, you cannot describe a body of thought as rigorous without scrutinizing its origins and its principles more closely than Numbers does. Creation science assumes that the Bible, as one formulation has it, "is the written Word of God, and because it is inspired throughout, all its assertions are historically and scientifically true in all the original autographs." But there isn't one biblical chronology, or one Bible, or a set of "original autographs." The Hebrew Old Testament and the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of it, differ by more than 1,000 years on the interval between the Creation and the beginning of the Christian era; and no two scholars who add up all the dates in the Hebrew text arrive at exactly the same results.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, historical chronology was a new and trendy field, exacting and interdisciplinary. It attracted the serious interest of Galileo, Kepler, Newton and Bayle. But even in that age of faith, Joseph Scaliger, the greatest of the chronologers, admitted that no one of sound mind could hope to provide rigorous and consistent dates for all the kings of Israel and Judah. Though biblical scholars nowadays have more sophisticated ideas than Scaliger about why the Old Testament gave so much space to genealogy, they are no more able than he was to make the data yield a consistent and valid history. And few of them would try to extract a real historical timeline from the text. After all, they know that the biblical text has evolved over the centuries, reached its final form recently and sheds no light on prehistory (but much on its authors' views about the world and the past).

Creation scientists did not invent their way of reading the Bible. It was devised, as Numbers does not say, by some Fathers of the Church and refined by certain later exegetes who read the text literal-mindedly, describing the shape and computing the volume of the Ark (and worrying about the disposal of the saved animals' dung). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this enterprise lost coherence, as deeper knowledge of the biblical text showed how many myths and contradictions it contained. Creation science can exist only at the price of ignoring all this history. It is a science that rests on denial of basic facts. The name of the enterprise is finally an oxymoron. The many scientific sins of evolutionists don't spoil their enterprise as the creationists' original scientific sin spoils theirs.

By treating creation science as a thing in itself, a science based on Genesis *and* geology, Numbers teases out its principles of argument and its methods of using evidence about nature. But his reader loses sight of the motives of the mass of individuals who have accepted creationist doctrines and, I suspect, of many of those who devised them. In many cases the passion to locate the beginning of history stems from an equal or greater passion to predict its end. Jerry Falwell, for example, happily proclaimed his belief a few years ago in "every word [of the Bible], quite literally, from Genesis to Revelation, which says there will soon be nuclear holy war over Jerusalem, after which Russia will be a fourth-rate power and Israel will astonish the world." And insofar as creation science and eschatology fit snugly together, Numbers's argument about the integrity and rigor of the former cannot stand. Creation science, for all Numbers's efforts to deny it, forms part of rural America's convulsive response to the vast movements of population and to the seismic political and economic changes that never ceased after the Civil War. The presence of an occasional tweed jacket in the crowd shouldn't conceal the homespun origins and polyester present of this revolution that faces backward.

Boyer, certainly, understands that emotions drive his subjects to create their elaborately argued systems. He sees that for all their proliferation of occult detail, the commentaries on Revelation basically reveal a single, coherent desire: the all-too-human need to find a pattern underlying the chaos of time, history and experience. But he, too, unnecessarily isolates his subject matter. For Boyer, "prophecy belief" means Protestant belief in biblical prophecy. But not all

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Americans who read biblical prophecy into modern history are Christians. Though Boyer has much to say about early Christians and Puritans, he does not discuss, say, the contemporary Jewish apocalypticism of the Lubavitchers, whose Messiah many believe has already arrived in Brooklyn.

More importantly, Daniel and Revelation are only two of many tools that Americans use to describe the shape of things to come. Astrology, for example, provides counsel for individuals and predictions of the collective future at every level of American society. A certain Linda Ashland reads horoscopes for the New York elite. Newspapers and magazines provide daily predictions, based on a form of the art far less rigorous and quantitative than the one that prevailed in the supposedly Dark Ages. And one prominent sixteenth-century astrologer and prophet, Nostradamus, warns all of us, according to a recent edition of his work, that George Bush will win in 1992 and that Diana Spencer will help Prince Charles revive the monarchy.

True, astrology and eschatology seem impossible to reconcile. The former is secular, the latter is sacred; the former is classical, the latter is Jewish and Christian. The case of the Reagans shows, however, that a single couple can practice both without any evident strain. Many of the prophecy manuals in the New Age section of any bookstore actually combine these and other systems, advising that one can find news of the coming age of Aquarius (or nuclear war, or environmental disaster, or the extermination of the Jews, or the exaltation of the Jews) in both the Bible and the heavens—as well as in the oracles of the pagan sibyls and the motions of the planets. Prediction, in other words, is more often eclectic than exclusive. And none of its forms necessarily withers at the touch of cold facts that refute it. No wonder, then, that an apocalyptic tone and imagery infiltrate genres as varied as science fiction movies and economic pamphlets, even though the end itself never seems to arrive.

These predictive obsessions, moreover, should not be immediately written off as peripheral to some supposedly more rational high culture—a temptation to which Boyer sometimes succumbs. Eschatological prophecy, as he shows, is distributed not only by small presses but by the profitable evangelical divisions of the mainline publishers. Harper & Row, for example, bought the prophecy publisher Zondervan for $57 million in 1988. Astrology and its cousins also have a firm place in the mainstream media. Putnam's and Berkeley distribute Erika Cheetham's *The Prophecies of Nostradamus*, *The Further Prophecies of Nostradamus* and *The Final Prophecies of Nostradamus*—each of which cheerfully revises the errors of its predecessor. Secular apocalypses, like their biblicist counterparts, sell. What lies behind a lot of messianism is . . . capitalism.

Still, the editors who give currency to astrology and worse only recognize a vital fact that Boyer does not quite acknowledge. A culture of prediction runs across our entire society. If anthropologists arrived here from Mars, they might well draw an analogy between the astrologers who use the movements of the stars to predict personal histories and the economists who use mathematical formulas to predict collective ones. Both perform complex rituals involving extensive computation. Both tell us how the future will unfold. Both frequently predict overwhelming disasters. Both are normally wrong. (Let us not exaggerate the fallibility of the economists and the astrologers. The astrologers are sometimes right.) And both are rewarded for their errors not with fools' caps but with higher fees, not to mention second, corrected editions of the predictions that didn't turn out well.

Such anthropologists might well see economics departments, Hal Lindsey, Paul Kennedy, Francis Fukuyama and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* as disparate evidence of a common passion, a need to subject the interminably chaotic affairs of humanity to rule and order. And that analogy might just tell us something profound about the American condition. Back in the 1960s Keith Thomas's marvelous *Religion and the Decline of Magic* explained why sorcery, astrology and eschatology flourished so widely in early modern England. Men and women could not control their physical and social universe by rational means. They lived under the constant threat of indigence and death, unable to protect crops from blight, houses from fire or loved ones from disease. In the end, however, science displaced sorcery. The rise of statistics and insurance caused the downfall of magic and astrology. Why perform spells to make your crops grow when you could buy insurance, rationally priced, to compensate you if they withered? The insurance salesman and the economist replaced the cunning man and woman, at least at the higher levels of society.

The material gathered by Boyer—and the relevant material that he omits—suggests conclusions rather different from Thomas's. Americans, for all their ethnic and cultural divergences, seem to share a passion for remembering things that have not happened yet. This stems less from our relation with nature—though that too may be less rational and controlled than we believed a generation ago—than from our lack of a relation with the past. We live in a society whose movements, vast, powerful, sometimes shatteringly violent, elude all efforts at control and often nullify our most cogent plans for self-protection. Virtually none of us can find consolation for mortality or shelter from history in a community to which real traditions bind us, a home where they really have to take us in. Such things hardly exist in this, the most mobile society the world has known. And so predictions console us—if only by saying, like the calm apocalyptic missionaries in *The Rapture*, that "it can't go on like this."

Moreover, the lack of historical

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grounding that makes us so obsessive about looking forward also makes us incapable of seeing that most of the prophecies that we gulp down have long since passed their sell-by date. As Boyer points out, the language and the content of "prophecy belief" are literally ancient. Millenarian prophecies are cast in imagery as traditional as it is wild, in a vivid language of forlorn hope created by Jews and early Christians desperate for consolation. The fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, the rise of Hellenism and the prohibition of circumcision and Sabbath observance in the second century B.C. and the persecution of the Christians by Nero all left their precipitates in the apocalyptic segments of the Bible. Many later prophets have applied these images, and the numerological systems that they supported, to the events of their own time. Franciscans and Flagellants, Taborites and Anabaptists, Luther and Milton all found in the world around them clear signs that the heavens would soon roll back.

But every one of these applications of the text has rested on exegesis as strained as Lindsey's. Moreover, every one of them resulted in disappointment, and many of them in disaster—like the American Millerite movement of the 1830s and '40s, which attracted some 50,000 committed adherents. A little history could do away with a lot of prophecy. Unfortunately, a little history is more than we seem to have—though Boyer's book, which retells this story so lucidly, could itself do some good.

Those of us who inhabit the tweedy world of universities and think tanks, old Eastern publishing houses and great Midwestern bookshops, may have less reason than we think to congratulate ourselves on the magnitude of our own rationality. We ask scientists and social scientists to apply quantitative models, which represent abstractions from real life and hold for strictly defined conditions, to predict the future of the atmosphere, the ocean and the economy—messy, complex and interdependent phenomena. True, some of our sciences really can tell us things about, and do things to, the world; some of our predictions really do rest on scrupulously gathered quantitative data and rules rigorously inferred from them. We should distinguish these ways of talking about the past and future from those that rest only on arbitrarily chosen texts and images, pulled from their original contexts; and we must not succumb to the trendy anti-rationalist pretense that there is no analytical difference between haruspication and histology.

And yet we should also admit that we, too, are caught up in the same rush to go back to the future before it actually arrives. Sadly, we refuse to recognize that the more interesting the questions we raise—How long will the Earth last? Will the environment degenerate? Will men ever share housework?—the less rigorous the answers become. The future, after all, poses one problem that no amount of science seems to overcome: you can't get there from here.

ANTHONY GRAFTON is the author most recently of *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Harvard University Press).

The Enigma of Arrival

BY CHRISTOPHER BENFEY

Dark Harbor: A Poem by Mark Strand

(Knopf, 51 pp., $19)

Mark Strand once seemed a precocious poet—perennially youthful in his photographs, ever productive. During the decade from 1968 to 1978, he published four volumes of poetry in quick succession (five, counting his epigrammatic musings on fame in *The Monument*), along with translations, anthologies, art criticism. His *Selected Poems*, which appeared in 1980, rounded off one intensive burst of creative activity. Now it turns out that Strand is a late bloomer as well, unafraid of silence; ten more years elapsed before the startling appearance of his next book of verse, *The Continuous Life*, in 1990. It became a best seller among poetry books (where comparisons run in the thousands, not the millions), and its readers are still discovering its riches.

Strand has worked steadily on, transforming himself from a surrealistic, "deep-image" poet of the '60s (a description that I will qualify in a moment) to someone who, in a different voice, eludes easy categorization. His new book is a kind of summing up: of the poet's task in dark times; of a poet's engagement with predecessors and contemporaries; of what poetry can make, and make happen. *Dark Harbor* is a fine occasion for making sense of Strand.

It is useful, for a start, to keep in mind a few things that Strand as a poet is not. He is neither a minute observer of present things nor a hoarder of things past. He does not write about evocative keepsakes or family photographs or the exotic plant in his study. The props in his poems are abstract and secondhand: valleys, clouds, darkness, silence, the sea, the mountains. We know that he was born near the ocean, in the maritime province of Prince Edward Island, and that he now lives near the mountains, in Salt Lake City, but in his work these great geographical realities are more representative than closely observed. The much ballyhooed "turn" in Strand's poetry circa 1978-80, when critics celebrated his use of autobiographical or "confessional" detail, was a momentary negotiation with outer claims in order to clear imaginative space. The main current in Strand's poetry has always been an inner landscape, as consistent in its recurring and solitary imagery as de Chirico's.

The early Strand is often grouped with such inner-directed, neosurrealist poets of the '60s as James Wright, W.S. Merwin, Galway Kinnell and Robert Bly (who lobbied for a poetry of "the deep images of the unconscious"). The title of Strand's first book of poems, *Sleeping with One Eye Open* (1964), frankly acknowledged his shuttle between the realms of dream and waking. But Strand's relations with Bly and company were always oblique, his stance that of a skeptical newcomer (born 1934) among slightly older contemporaries (born 1926-27). While those poets were abandoning rhyme and meter as too Western and too wide awake, Strand found fresh ways to mine and to undermine sound and image.

Consider a fairly typical oneiric passage from James Wright—"Two athletes / Are dancing in the cathedral / Of the wind ... / Small antelopes / Fall asleep in the ashes / Of the moon" ("Spring Images")—and compare it to a windy-night poem of Strand's from the same period:

> Unmoved by what the wind does,
> The windows
> Are not rattled, nor do the various
> Areas

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Of the house make their usual racket—
Creak at
The joints, trusses and studs.
Instead,
They are still. And the maples,
Able
At times to raise havoc,
Evoke
Not a sound from their branches'
Clutches.
It's my night to be rattled . . .
—"Sleeping with One Eye Open"

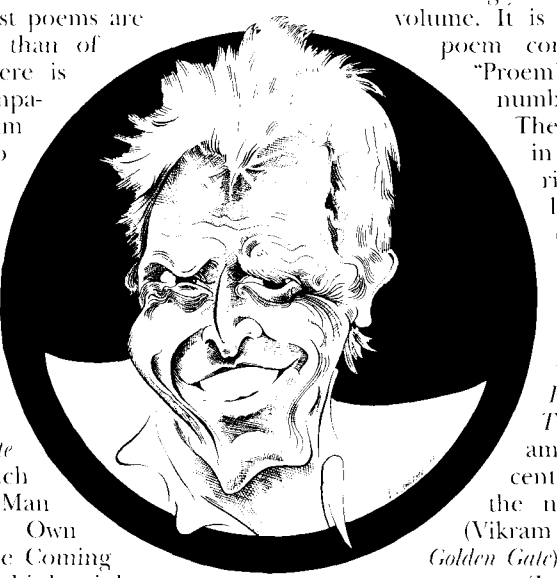
Where Wright relies on juxtapositions of striking imagery, keeping sound effects to a minimum, Strand's echoing off-rhymes, always unexpected, have their own somnolent rightness; they are as dream-driven as the images, as they move from the unrattled windows to the rattled, and later "moonhandled," sleeper. Strand found a vein to work here, a use of rhyme not as a rein but as a spur to the unconscious. (Not surprisingly, he chose to open his *Selected Poems* with this early poem; it is still a breathtaking performance.)

If surrealism refers to the controlled aesthetic deployment of images from the unconscious, then "sleeping with one eye open" is a pretty good definition of it. We still lack a convincing account of why surrealism became the dominant poetic mode in the United States during the '60s, why (as Walter Benjamin wrote of the "classic" surrealism of the 1920s)

> life only seemed worth living where the threshold between waking and sleeping was worn away in everyone [and] language only seemed itself where sound and image, image and sound interpenetrated with automatic precision and such felicity that no chink was left for the penny-in-the-slot called "meaning."

Was such poetry part of a wider cultural exploration of inner reality, a pushing of the "doors of perception"? Was it a reaction to the more argumentative, discursive poetry of the 1950s—what Wright called "the poetry of calcium"? Was it an escape from—or a path into—the waking nightmares of Vietnam? Probably some combination of these and more idiosyncratic factors was operative, differently mixed in each poet. For all of them, the habitual paranoia of the time manifested itself in the conviction that poetic truth was only to be found in the covert operations of the mind, the armies of the night conspiring in darkness.

Nothing is duller, though, than other people's dreams, and the aesthetic challenge for the nightmare writers of the '60s was to forge dream sequences that had a logic beyond the merely contingent, this-happened-then-that-happened-and-I-screamed mishmash of the ordinary nightmare. Strand's dream poems always have a sly wit (he's sleeping with one eye winking), as though he is already commenting on his generation's obsession with primer-book syntax and the "deep image." Even a poem as thoroughly of its time as the much anthologized "Eating Poetry" ends with a wink. The librarian objects to the poet's literal consumption of poetry. "When I get on my knees and lick her hand, / she screams. / I am a new man. / I snarl at her and bark. / I romp with joy in the bookish dark." "Bookish dark" perfectly describes the lightless aisles of the library, but it also names, with ironic force, the overly literary cast of the nightmares of '60s poets, a generation that produced titles like Kinnell's *A Book of Nightmares* and Strand's own *Darker*.



Strand's newest poems are less of dreams than of waking, and there is a palpable impatience with dream narratives. ("No dreams, please," I remember Derek Walcott telling a class of poetic aspirants circa 1980.) There are premonitions in some of the shorter poems of *The Late Hour* (1978), such as "An Old Man Awake in His Own Death" and "The Coming of Light" ("Even this late it happens: / The coming of love, the coming of light. / You wake and the candles are lit as if by themselves . . ."). It is as though surrealism were a kind of enchantment, a spell you could awake from after the lapse of years, especially if the right person kissed you.

And Strand's surrealism—all darkness and dream, the darker the better—really does seem, in retrospect, like a long sleep, preparing for the wonderful daylight poems of *The Continuous Life* and their sense of waking into the ordinary, the common, the shared:

Oh parents, confess
To your little ones the night is a long way off
And your taste for the mundane grows; tell them
Your worship of household chores has barely begun;
Describe the beauty of shovels and rakes, brooms and mops;

. . . . . .

Explain that you live between two great darks, the first
With an ending, the second without one, that the luckiest
Thing is having been born, that you live in a blur
Of hours and days, months and years, and believe
It has meaning, despite the occasional fear
You are slipping away with nothing completed, nothing
To prove you existed.

This praise of the ordinary has deep roots in American writing, from Emerson to Stevens and on to Ashbery. Strand's new voice is audible here—ruminative, accepting, gently self-mocking. (Don't expect him to describe those brooms and mops.) The sentences are long, slung out across those subordinate clauses so carefully eschewed in the dream poems of ten years earlier.

This is the voice of *Dark Harbor*, Strand's hauntingly beautiful new volume. It is a single long poem consisting of a "Proem" and forty-five numbered sections. The long poem in English derives from at least three traditions, each with its own conventions and generic expectations: the epic (*The Bridge*, *Paterson*, *The Waste Land*, among twentieth-century examples); the novel in verse (Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate*); and the sonnet sequence (Lowell's *Notebook* and its spin-off volumes, *Berryman's Sonnets*). *Dark Harbor* belongs to the third category; its major forebears are Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* and Stevens's longer poetic sequences. The elastic, three-line stanzas, with a good deal of enjambment across lines and across stanzas, also derive from Stevens, and from various versions of terza rima reaching back to Dante (a bit of whose work Strand has recently translated).

Strand's form allows him the freedom and the flexibility of a collection of loosely linked short poems, but also the growing power of a larger architectural shape. The overarching plot of *Dark Harbor* is the poet's counterlife in art, from his initial departure from the enclosure of family and home, to his journey through a place of darkness and uncertainty, to his final sense of safe harbor within the community of other poets. I oversimplify, of course: nothing could be further from Strand's elliptical and off-beat strategies than such a rigid-sounding scheme.

Strand's poetry has a high finish; it

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has always been marked by neatness and clarity. *Dark Harbor* is dedicated to the painter William Bailey, whose clean-edged still-lifes adorn some of Strand's books (including this new one). Strand's "Proem" draws an explicit analogy between his task and a painter's, as he traces the poet's necessary departure from everything familiar:

> "This is my Main Street," he said as he started off
> That morning, leaving the town to others,
> Entering the high-woods tipped in pink
>
> By the rising sun but still dark where he walked.

He waits for "the great space that he felt sure / Would open before him," where he would "begin to mark, almost as a painter would, / The passages of greater and lesser worth." "Everything," he adds, "would have an edge." The phrase is itself double-edged; Strand means that his art will have clear boundaries, but also that it will be edgy, on edge.

Most of these poems are elegies, mourning the passing of some prior splendor in the poet's own earlier life or in the art of an earlier time. Like the "Proem," they are poems of farewell:

> It is true, as someone has said, that in
> A world without heaven all is farewell.
> Whether you wave your hand or not,
>
> It is farewell, and if no tears come to your eyes
> It is still farewell, and if you pretend not to notice,
> Hating what passes, it is still farewell.
> Farewell no matter what.

The someone here is Stevens, who didn't quite say this in "Waving Adieu, Adieu, Adieu." But Strand's poem is itself a tribute to Stevens's mythmaking, in a world unsponsored by paradise.

Strand has always had what Stevens called "a mind of winter," more attuned to austerities than to luxuries. He is in love with negatives, privatives, the empty and erased. "I would like to be / In that solitude of soundless things, in the random / Company of the wind, to be weightless, nameless" (XVIII). When he mulls over "the seasonal possibilities" in one poem (XVII) and vows in another to take as his muse "The burning / Will of weather" ("Proem"), it's winter, predictably, that he apostrophizes:

> O pretty densities of white on white!
> O snowflake lost in the vestibules of April air!
>
> Beyond the sadness—the empty restaurants,
> The empty streets, the small lamps shining
> Down on the town—I see only the stretches
>
> Of ice and snow, the straight pines, the frigid moon.

In these late poems, Strand has begun to notice the snow in his own hair: "Here comes old age, dragging a tale of soft / Inconvenience, of golfing in Florida, / Of gumming bad food." He sees himself increasingly as an aging poet writing in dark times. In a poem that links him compellingly with Ashbery—it is not the only bow to Ashbery in this book—Strand notes that "There is / A current of resignation that charges even our most / Determined productions." In another poem, where Whitman is the honored companion ("Me at my foulest, the song of me . . . "), Strand says flatly, his own Jeremiah, "These are bad times. Idiots have stolen the moonlight. / They cast their shadowy pomp wherever they wish."

Such poems, in which Strand acknowledges a community of poets, both quick and dead, to keep the practicing poet company, are among the most powerful in *Dark Harbor*. In poem XXVII, six unnamed poets are invoked and praised—the first three for achievements of rhetoric ("I love how the beautiful echoed / Within the languorous length of his sentences, / Forming a pleasing pointless commotion"), the second three for intensities of vision ("Of yet another the precision, the pursuit of rightness, / Balance, some ineffable decorum, the measured, circuitous / Stalking of the subject, turning surprise to revelation").

It is a guessing game. Is that Wallace Stevens behind Door No. 1? Elizabeth Bishop behind No. 4, or No. 6? But more important than any particular identification are the terms of appreciation here. Three poets who verge on absurdity and chaos, three poets who verge on revelation. What Strand admires is the pushing to extremes, the flirtation with the pointless (here meaning, also, "without punctuation," or "pointing") and also the pushing toward vision. It is a high-wire act that the poem itself enacts, with its graceful tercets and its single long, languorous sentence covering twenty-one lines and concluding like a child's counting game:

> And that leaves this one on the side of his mountain,
> Hunched over the page, thanking his loves for coming
> And keeping him company all this time.

The company of poets can be intimidating, however, and in *Dark Harbor* this fear is embodied in the figure of Marsyas, the mythical satyr who lost a singing contest with Apollo. For his uppitiness, Marsyas was flayed alive and his skin nailed to a pine ("or," adds Robert Graves, "some say, to a plane tree").

> When after a long silence one picks up the pen
> And leans over the paper and says to himself:
> Today I shall consider Marsyas
>
> Whose body was flayed to excess,
> Who made no crime that would square
> With what he was made to suffer.

Strand's lines, referring perhaps to his own silence during the 1980s, imply no link between the long silence and the "crime" of Marsyas. But the link is clearly that of fear of not being good enough, the writer's "block" that is both obstacle and punishment (as for beheading). Strand concludes that all poets experience something of Marsyas's fate, their "body" of work necessarily flayed and fragmentary, their voices supplanted by newer voices ("The airy demon dies, and others come along. / A different kind of dark invades the autumn woods . . . ").

No one is as wary of the silver lining as Strand—"The Beyond is merely beyond, / A melancholy place of failed and fallen stars"—so I hesitate to assert that there's a countervailing trend in his work. There is, though. It is his welcoming of change, the "*Wink und Wandlung*" ("change in the wink of an eye") that Rilke said Orpheus brought, or, in Strand's more limited claim:

> Orpheus can change the world
> For a while, but he cannot save it, which is his despair.
> It is a brilliant limitation he enacts and
>
> He knows it, which is why the current of his song
> Is always mournful, always sad. It is even worse
> For the rest of us.

Those two enjambments—"change the world / For a while" and "even worse / For the rest of us"—severely qualify the possibilities of change.

Still, Strand finds reasons enough for celebration in his themes of metamorphosis. There is a wonderfully funny and poignant prose poem in *The Continuous Life* that consists of letters from Kafka's Gregor Samsa and his baffled sister Grete, after his transformation into a cockroach. "Do we not, if we are lucky, live many lives, assume many masks, and, with death always imminent, do we not keep hoping to be reborn?" asks Gregor, reasonably enough.

> This is the human condition. We are citizens of one world only when we apply to the next; we are perpetual exiles, living on the outside of what is possible, creating for ourselves the terms of our exclusion, yet

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hoping to overcome them. Our misery and our happiness are inextricable. So I ask you, why so much attention given to just one life?

In a world of change—the continuous life, the constant farewell—we are hedged about with such uncertainties. It is not by accident that the dominant punctuation in *Dark Harbor* is the question mark. Strand wants to push up against the next change, the next life—to feel that edge. "After a long silence, would I, whose body / is whole, sheltered, kept in the dark by a mind / That prefers it that way, know what I'd done / And what its worth was?" A good question, and one that every honest artist can't help asking. But I hope that Strand's next silence will not be a long one.

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Inventing Britain

BY CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837 by Linda Colley

(Yale University Press, 429 pp., $35)

This book, composed of eight closely related essays titled "Protestant," "Profits," "Peripheries," "Dominance," "Majesty," "Womanpower," "Manpower" and "Victories," together with a short concluding section, is extremely learned and penetrating. It is also most entertaining. Linda Colley is a historian who has a rare combination of qualities. She is subtle, where subtlety is required. She penetrates below surfaces, where surfaces are misleading. But also—rarest quality of all—she respects the obvious, where she has tested it and found it solid.

Many historians, glorying in their possession of subtlety and penetration, take the obvious as a challenge to their powers. They festoon it with pedantic qualifications and reservations until it is completely obscured—not to the advantage of historiography but to its detriment. As Colley puts it in a particular case:

> The absolute centrality of Protestantism to British religious experience in the 1700s and long after is so obvious that it has proved easy to pass over. Always reluctant to be seen to be addressing the obvious, historians have preferred to concentrate on the more subtle divisions that existed within the Protestant community itself, on the tensions between Anglicans and Protestant non-conformists in England and Wales, between Presbyterians and Episcopalians in Scotland, and between the older forms of dissent that emerged in the seventeenth century, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers and the like, and newer versions such as Methodism. These internal rivalries were abundant and serious. But they should not obscure what was still the most striking feature in the religious landscape, the gulf between Protestant and Catholic.

Colley is also good at identifying, and avoiding, distorting tendencies produced by fashions in historiography, particularly by the fondness of some historians for lingering over economic and class conflicts:

> Conflict and dissatisfaction there often was, of course, over taxation, over foreign policy and over the government's commercial policy at home. But while acknowledging these disagreements, we should not forget the background of mutual dependence. For if Britain's landed politicians had a vested interest in advancing trade, it was also the case that the majority of men and women of trade needed what the nation-state had to offer.

Again, this might seem obvious. The sad truth, however, is that sometimes, and for historians in particular, the obvious is lost to sight.

1707, Colley's opening year, was the year of the Act of (Parliamentary) Union between England and Scotland. Her thesis is that England and Scotland did indeed become one nation, linked by a common Protestantism and a common Protestant and national hatred and fear of Catholic France. The bond was as strong as the threat was great. France was the greatest European power in the eighteenth century, as Spain had been in the sixteenth century. British nationalism in the eighteenth century defined itself against France, just as English nationalism in the sixteenth century had defined itself against Spain. The reason for British hostility to France was that it was powerful, near and ambitious. But the focus of British hostility to France was France's Catholicity. This was ironic, since France was ceasing to be Catholic by the middle of the eighteenth century. And by the end of that century and into the next, the anti-Catholic France of the Revolution and the post-Catholic France of Napoleon made a more formidable foe than Catholic France ever had done, even under Louis XIV.

Scottish readers may be offended by Colley's summary treatment of Scottish nationality. The reality seems to be that England and Scotland became one nation for certain purposes, while remaining separate for others. They were one nation for the purposes of parliamentary government, of defense and of the governance of the empire. In language and in religion, they were distinct; but they were not incompatible.

The Scotland that came to think of itself as British was essentially the Lowlands (plus the Campbell Clan in the Western Highlands). Most Highlanders were Gaelic-speaking, like the Irish, with relatively minor dialectical differences. And so the Highlanders, many of whom were Catholics, were outside the consensus that composed the Union. The Lowlanders, who were part of that consensus, spoke a language like English, again with relatively minor dialectical differences; educated Lowlanders had full command of standard English by the eighteenth century and could use it to great effect, as David Hume and Adam Smith prove. In religion, England's Anglicanism (and its various forms of nonconformity) was different, in terms of formal theology, from Scotland's Presbyterianism, but both belonged to a common Reformation tradition. The differences between them were not a barrier, after the Union of the Crowns in 1603, to the acceptance of the monarch as head of both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. In short, differences in language and religion were real, but they were not large enough to prevent the emergence, for the purposes outlined, of one nation, bonded by anti-Catholicism and Francophobia.

Colley sees geography as a factor making for "one nation." "As one clergyman put it in a sermon delivered in celebration of the act of Union: 'We are fenced in with a wall which knows no master but God only.'" Yet the idea of "a wall" around a nation existed long before 1707. In the English imagination, the

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island-nation was *England*. Shakespeare's *Richard II* was written in 1595-96, even before the Union of the Crowns, when Scotland was in all respects a sovereign and independent state. Yet Shakespeare could have John O'Gaunt famously declare:

> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall,
> Or as a moat defensive to a house,
> Against the envy of less happier lands;
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

With the passage of the Act of Union in 1707, John O'Gaunt's imaginary island became a real political entity commensurate with a real geographical entity. This must have been a source of satisfaction to English nationalists. All nationalism, after all, is expansive, craving to fill up whatever geographical unit seems indicated by nature, or its reading of nature: an island in this case, a subcontinent in the case of America (or the famous "natural frontiers of France"). English nationalism was strong; but Scottish nationalism was so weak, in the eighteenth century, as to be almost nonexistent. Otherwise the merger into Great Britain, with England as the predominant partner, would not have been acceptable.

> I think that the ordinary Englishman's view of the Act of Union was that the Scots had now come to their senses and accepted the English view of the matter: that the whole island was England. Later the discovery of Scottish upward mobility put a strain on the Union. The accession of George III put an even greater strain on it, when it was found that the new king had a Scottish favorite in Lord Bute. The Wilkes and Liberty agitation followed, with a great deal of anti-Scottish propaganda. When, in the 1760s, John Wilkes, in a paper sarcastically titled *The North Briton*, vigorously attacked "the Scotch" and George III's alleged partiality to them, he won strong support in London, and the controversy led to a constitutional crisis. I have never before read such a penetrating analysis of the dynamics of the Wilkes and Liberty movement as this passage by Colley:
>
> > In the words of William Beckford, the London M.P. whose fortune rested on West Indian trade, Wilkite activists rejected the belief that a man's patriotism was to be measured "by the number of his acres." Instead, by stressing their supreme solicitude for liberty and by arguing that liberty was synonymous with Englishness, they advanced their own superior claims as patriots. Individuals like themselves, men of movable property, whether dissenting or Anglican, not only had an equal right with the landed classes to active citizenship. They had a better right, for they were better Englishmen.

Still, the crisis was not—this is significant—over the Union but over the right of an elected member to take his seat in the House of Commons even if (as was the case of Wilkes) a majority of the members did not want to have him. Colley's thesis is basically sound. The new British nation proved strong enough, politically, to survive these strains. In the late twentieth century, to be sure, with the relative decline and the general malaise of Britain, there have been stirrings of Scottish nationalism, but not on a scale sufficient to shake the Union. A referendum proposing devolution for Scotland was defeated by a vote of approximately 2-to-1. Had there been a referendum on sovereign independence for Scotland, as demanded by the Scottish Nationalist Party, that would have been defeated by a much wider margin.

> Colley's perspective excludes Ireland. It is a significant omission of which she is aware. In her introduction, she writes:
>
> > But although I occasionally refer to those Irishmen and women who lived on the British mainland, I have deliberately not written about Ireland itself. The invention of Britishness was so closely bound up with Protestantism, with war with France and with the acquisition of empire, that Ireland was never able or willing to play a satisfactory part in it. Its population was more Catholic than Protestant. It was the ideal jumping-off spot for a French invasion of Britain, and both its Catholic and its Protestant dissidents traditionally looked to France for aid. And although Irishmen were (and still are) an important component of Britain's armed forces, and individual Irishmen played leading imperial roles as generals, diplomatists and pro-consuls, Ireland's relationship with the empire was always a deeply ambiguous one. How could it not be, when London treated it as a colony, and when Irishmen of all kinds partook, as Roy Foster has written, "psychologically and pragmatically ... of attitudes best called colonial"? Ireland was cut off from Great Britain by the sea; but it was cut off still more effectively by the prejudices of the English, Welsh and Scots, and by the self-image of the bulk of the Irish themselves, both Protestants and Catholics.

The argument has weight, but it leaves out quite a lot. Most Irish people welcomed the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland in 1800. The Catholic Church in particular was strongly in favor of the Union, if only because the Parliament of Ireland, which the Union abolished, had been an exclusively Protestant body. The France that declared war on "the King of England" in February 1793 was not Catholic, it was violently anti-Catholic. Thus England and the Catholic Church were allies, not merely from 1793 to 1815, but throughout the nineteenth century. If, as Pitt intended, the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland had been accompanied by the completion of Catholic Emancipation, the Union with Ireland might have proved as durable as that with Scotland.

As it was, the completion of Catholic Emancipation was withheld because it was opposed by George III, and the Irish relation to the Union soured. When Catholic Emancipation came, in 1829, it was not conceded as a measure of statesmanship, but extorted by mass agitation. Catholic Emancipation was followed by more mass agitation, this time for Repeal of the Union. The opportunity that was missed in 1800 never recurred.

The history of Anglo-Irish relations would have been different if that opportunity had been taken; and I believe it would have been if Edmund Burke, who died in July 1797, had lived three years longer. In 1792-93 Burke had arranged for George III to receive the petitioners of the Catholic Convention, and this meeting smoothed the way for the passage of the Catholic Relief Act of 1793, which conferred the franchise on Catholics. What was needed in 1800 was the immediate completion of the process, by allowing elected Catholics to take their seats in Parliament. George III, who had not balked at the franchise, was convinced that to let Catholics sit in Parliament would be contrary to his Coronation Oath. Burke had immense powers of persuasion, was an expert on the Coronation Oath, and had been on excellent terms with George III since the publication of *Reflections on the Revolution in France* toward the end of 1790. I believe that Burke, had he lived, could have removed the royal scruple, to the great future benefit both of Great Britain and Ireland. But it was not to be.

One of the great merits of Colley's book is its brilliant use of iconography. The book is copiously and aptly illustrated, and several of the illustrations are accompanied by illuminating analytic commentary. Consider the following passage, interpreting *The March to Finchley*, Hogarth's engraving of 1750, which shows a London street scene in 1745, after the news had arrived that the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, had crossed the English border from

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Scotland and reached Derby. Colley describes the Hogarth inquiry as a

> tumultuous evocation of the king's forces assembling in one of the poorer London districts in readiness for their march north to do battle with Charles Edward Stuart and his men. George II is supposed to have found the painting subversive, because it showed the chaos of a not all that well-planned mobilization; the bewildered common soldiery, with their stiff new uniforms, their provisions bundled haphazardly into carts and their camp-followers and waiting bastards tagging along behind them. Yet, like so much of Hogarth's work, this is, in fact, a profoundly patriotic image.
>
> Its central figure, a particularly harassed-looking guardsman, being fought over by two women who may or may not be his two wives, is actually Britain itself. Clinging devotedly to his right arm is a ballad-singer dressed in rags but nonetheless all in white, fair of face and heavily pregnant. Attacking him from the left (the wrong side by artistic convention) is a much older and viciously ugly newsvendor, draped in black like a monk, a crucifix swinging from her neck, her sack full of virulently opposition newspapers. What we are being shown in microcosm is a crisis of political decision-making taking place on a much wider scale. Was Great Britain to remain true to the Hanoverian dynasty represented here in the person of the woman in white, the ballad-singer, with the words of 'God Save the King' hanging conspicuously from her basket? Or would it succumb to the Stuarts in the person of the newsvendor? In the light of the painting, there can be no doubting as to what is the right decision. The woman in white is fertile as well as fair, her belly, like the basket she carries on her arm, filled with the future. By contrast, the Stuarts' representative is old and therefore barren. She threatens violence, and she is unmistakably Roman Catholic. Such characterizations plainly reflect Hogarth's own bias, but underlying them is a valid and important point. The politics of Great Britain at this time, the way in which the state was organized and the ideas men and woman held about it, were inextricably linked with perceptions of Catholicism and Protestantism.

For many of her readers, Colley's essay of greatest interest will be the one on "Womanpower." She finds, for example, that there was a great deal of political activity by British women during the war with revolutionary France that broke out in February 1793. This activity was in support of the British war effort, through collections of money, garments and so on, and through the organization of subscriptions. Colley argues that this activity has been underestimated, perhaps for ideological reasons, not least by women's historians themselves:

> Women's historians have largely ignored the wealth of evidence about female property and family politics contained in these patriotic subscription lists (and hundreds of them survive), perhaps because of the lingering belief that women are or should be more pacifist than men. Yet in the wars against revolutionary and Napoleonic France, as in so many later conflicts, British women seem, in fact, to have been no more markedly pacifist than men. Instead, and exactly like many of their male countrymen, some women found ways of combining support for the national interest with a measure of self-promotion. By assisting the war effort, women demonstrated—in a highly acceptable fashion—that their concerns were by no means confined to the domestic sphere. Under cover of a patriotism that was often genuine and profound, they carved out for themselves a real if precarious place in the public sphere.

I suspect that the primary reason women's historians "largely ignored" the activity in question is not pacifism, being an objection to all wars, but rather an objection to the particular war effort that these women were enthusiastically supporting. This was a war, after all, against revolutionary France. Many women's historians tend to be progressives or radicals, and progressives and radicals admire the French Revolution, or at least are not prepared to support those who fought against it and thought it evil. In the radical perspective, the French revolutionaries were trying to liberate the people of Great Britain from an oppressive system, so the activity of the women about whom Colley writes was reactionary. It is also inconvenient to the progressive historian, since it strongly suggests that the people of Great Britain, including the women, were not in fact yearning, as they should have been, to be liberated by the French revolutionaries. So all in all, the less said about the whole thing, the better.

As this century ends, British nationalism is ostensibly in eclipse, but there is rumbling below the surface. All the political parties are essentially committed to the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, but polls show that a large majority is in favor of a referendum on ratification, and also that ratification would be rejected in such a referendum. Strengthened by these polls, the so-called "Euroskeptics"—British nationalists, mostly Tories—have obliged John Major to defer parliamentary ratification of the treaty, and it is doubtful whether this will ever occur. In almost every country of the Community, Maastricht has done the opposite of what its framers intended: it has revived nationalism instead of putting it to sleep. The only exception is Belgium, which is not quite a nation. Britain still is one.

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN is the author most recently of *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography of Edmund Burke* (University of Chicago Press).

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Free Spirits

By Wendy Lesser

The Oracle at Stoneleigh Court by Peter Taylor

(Knopf, 324 pp., $22)

Peter Taylor has always written about the hold of the past on the present. Sometimes it is the past of a particular character, usually the narrator, whose childhood and youth are so intensely present to him that he can barely get on with his adult life. Sometimes it is the regional past: the old proprieties of Tennessee, the ancient differences between Memphis and Nashville, the restrictive rules by which post-bellum Southerners are expected to exhibit their gentlemanliness and their ladylikeness.

Often it is both, as in his prize-winning novel *A Summons to Memphis* (1986), which details the narrator's present-day relationship to his father and sisters in light of the family's and the region's past. Having moved his wife and children from Nashville to Memphis to escape a dishonest business colleague, and having thereby permanently disrupted the course of their lives, the father in *Summons* ends up suffering the traditional Memphis punishment: interference in his old-age plans (really, utter destruction of his autonomy) by his meddling, middle-aged, spinster daughters, who are passively, resistantly but nonetheless crucially aided by their brother. As in all of Taylor's works, the tone of this novel is so delicate that it cannot fairly be described as comic or sad: it is rather a tone of etiolated nostalgia, with all of its attendant ridiculousness.

A Summons to Memphis, as well as *The Old Forest and Other Stories* (1985), demonstrated that even in his late 60s Taylor could write at the top of his form. Perhaps these successes encouraged him to feel that he could, with impunity, let down his hair a bit, show us a side of his writing that was a little less masterful, a little less under his control. This he has done, at any rate, in the new book of stories. It is clear that some of these stories—three of which are actually one-act plays—were composed long ago and are only now being brought to light. Others are obviously more recent, and still others employ Taylor's usual tactic of viewing the distant past from a modern-day perspective. A few of the stories, including the title tale as well as "Demons" and "In the Waiting Room," are practically Taylor at his best. Some are barely more than fragments or sketches, though the writing in them is never fragmentary: even Taylor's skeletons have fleshed-out prose. What unites all the tales in this book is their concern with the idea of ghosts, or witches, or spiritual influences of some kind.

Though this hardly sounds like a respectable topic to have attracted an elder statesman of our literature, there are ample precedents. Two of them—Henry James's story "The Jolly Corner" and Ibsen's play *Ghosts*—seem particularly to haunt the present collection. One feels the Ibsen heritage in Taylor's perceptions about childhood's deep sensibilities, which come through in "Demons" and "The End of Play"; or in his delicate awareness of how familial, regional and class-based conservatism all mingle together, as they do in "In the Waiting Room" and "The Decline and Fall of the Episcopal Church." But it is in the three one-act plays that we get unadulterated Ibsen. There the Norwegian's icy hand appears not only in the dramatic structure, but in the repeated idea of the old and dead reaching out from beyond the grave to stifle the young and living.

Somerset Maugham has wittily remarked about Ibsen that "his only gambit is the sudden arrival of a stranger who comes into a stuffy room and opens the windows; whereupon the people who were sitting there catch their death of cold and everything ends unhappily." True as this is of most Ibsen plays, it does not apply to *Ghosts*, where all the significant action has been completed before the play begins, and where the viciousness of the older generation is simply left to work its punishment on the young. A father, not a stranger, is responsible for the unhappy fate of Oswald Ahlving (he is dying of inherited syphilis); and it is a father who has been dead for ten years. "I almost believe we *are* ghosts, all of us, Pastor," says Mrs. Ahlving, Oswald's mother, in the key speech of the play. "It's not only what we inherit from our fathers and mothers that keeps on returning in us. It's all kinds of old dead doctrines and opinions and beliefs, that sort of thing." This is so apt to Taylor's ghost stories that he might well have used it as the book's epigraph.

Unlike Ibsen, Taylor is not a master of the dramatic form, and his one-acts are creakily explicit. But this very explicitness, which damns them as literature, is exactly what makes the plays interesting as case studies in authorial psychology. Here we see Taylor's darkest and most vengeful side, unmediated by the rich humor of his usual narrative style.

A grown-up brother and sister argue over their dead father's character, after which the father's ghost appears to each of them: to the man as a dilapidated wreck, to the woman as a handsome young lover. An old father, lying on his deathbed, speaks first with the ghost of the beloved daughter he long ago disinherited, and then with her living son, the grandson he has not seen until that moment. A middle-aged couple whose only son has just gone missing in Vietnam see him returned to life, but embodying their worst fears: he is a draft-dodging hippie in the eyes of his father, a cold-hearted killer when he confronts his mother. Reading these plays (which couldn't possibly be performed), you feel you're plunging straight into the realm of Taylor's deepest preoccupations. The plays are like unsheathed daggers, instruments of Oedipal revenge.

The fact that Taylor wanted to write plays but couldn't has, perhaps, enriched his fiction in very much the way it did James's. One of the fragmentary stories in this collection, "The Real Ghost," is virtually a retelling of James's "The Jolly Corner," in suitably Jamesian language. "How long he remained poised so on the top step he couldn't afterward have said," begins the second paragraph of Taylor's story. "But he did know afterward, when he stood at the foot of the stairs again, just what he had confronted upstairs, though he did not know for how long a time he saw what he saw." Partly, this is Taylor's attempt to lay claim to his respectable heritage. But it is also something more. The Jamesian style was invented to portray the nuance of individual viewpoint—to suggest that even the barest, most pointed "facts" can be true only from a particular perspective, with all the qualifying subjectivity that implies. This style is thus singularly appropriate to the contemplation of witches and ghosts, who *only* appear (when they appear at all) to the individual capable of perceiving them.

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As James did in "The Jolly Corner," Taylor links the suspicions inherent in ghost-spotting to the suspicions and fears aroused by adult sexual love. James's Spencer Brydon awakens from his spine-chilling bout with his ghostly alter ego to find his head, literally, in the lap of the woman he belatedly loves. No less resistant to the entanglements of sex is Taylor's narrator Roger in "The Oracle at Stoneleigh Court." An eighty-eight-page novella set during and immediately after the Second World War, "The Oracle" is really a witch story more than a ghost story, chronicling the mystical connection between the narrator's weird old Aunt Gussie and the glamorously sexual Lila Montgomery.

Unlike the quieter, "nicer" girls from Roger's home state of Tennessee, Lila chooses to work her way through the war at a high-powered job; in doing so, she remains mysteriously inaccessible to Roger. "Somehow it dawned on me only in that moment that I wished to ask Lila to marry me," says the rather obtuse Roger about a fruitless visit he paid to Lila's Washington, D.C., office. "It seemed that I had always intended to make her my wife, but the wish or idea had never surfaced from my subconscious till I looked at the swivel chair where I knew she usually sat." Like a ghost, Lila is most powerful in her absence. The crucially Jamesian phrase that Taylor has made his own is that little "I knew," implying as it does that even a minor fact (where she sits) must be sifted through an individual sensibility. And the knowledge that comes to Roger in this scene is itself suspect: he may *think* he intends to marry Lila, but in the end he succumbs to a much more familiar, familial arrangement.

Witches and, to a lesser extent, other aspects of spiritualism have traditionally been viewed as primarily female (leading some modern-day feminists specifically to include witches among their oppressed constituencies). Taylor uses and, one might say, abuses this tradition. The witches in "The Oracle at Stoneleigh Court" and "The Witch of Owl Mountain Springs" are typical old crones, scary, unattached females with no man around to control them. And in "An Overwhelming Question," though there is no explicit witchcraft, the young male protagonist dies a sudden, ghastly death while fleeing the sexual advances of his fiancée: "His neck was broken, the life gone out of his body, but he was safe from Isabel at last, poor fellow" is the last line of the story. Older sisters, oppressive sisters-in-law and proprietary grandmothers and aunts are powerful, insistent presences in the bulk of these stories, most of which are told by some hapless male.

But Taylor cannot be identified with his female-fearing men. As an author, he takes great pains to give us so much distance on his male narrators that we are often left with a feeling of condescension toward them, if not outright contempt. The man who tells us, in "The Witch of Owl Mountain Springs," that the evil doings in that mountain resort can be blamed on a disappointed old maid is the same man who tells us that the resort excluded Jews because "it was natural that no Jewish people would wish to go there." So when this narrator tells us that he always thinks of the lovely young girls of his youth "in intimate clusters of, say, twelve or fourteen," with "their lovely arms ... forever intertwined, as it were, and also—so I believed—their young lives," we know we are dealing with someone whose perspective on the female sex is, shall we say, limited.

It is through such tactics that Taylor differentiates himself from other writers who have been equally possessed by regional influences. When the Southern Agrarian poet John Crowe Ransom urges, "Practise your beauty, blue girls, before it fail ... For I could tell you a story which is true; / I know a lady with a terrible tongue, / Blear eyes fallen from blue, / All her perfections tarnished—yet it is not long / Since she was lovelier than any of you," we are expected to take his observation as straightforward fact, and therefore as important evidence regarding the function of female beauty. But when Ransom's fellow Southerner Taylor has his narrator say, "By then her craggy old face and her unkempt hair could remind one of nothing that was human, much less of those long-ago charming girls," we are meant to realize that this is not some kind of impersonal truth, but an opinion of one old man, "a single man still, as I have remained all my life," whose views of women are as narrow as his range of experience. The witches and ghosts who haunt Taylor's stories tell us more about the people who believe in them than they do about themselves.

Whether their author is one of those believers is, finally, impossible to ascertain. If I were forced to guess, I would venture to say that Peter Taylor "believes in" ghosts, witches, visions and other spiritual phenomena in much the same way he "believes in" the rigid traditions that, in his stories, haunt Tennessee society. That is, he would not be so foolhardy as to proclaim their nonexistence; but he would, perhaps, circumspectly suggest that they ought not be granted any undue influence over the lives of those who are still on this side of the grave.

WENDY LESSER is the editor of *The Threepenny Review* and the author of *His Other Half* (Harvard University Press).

Sainte-Chapelle

Climbing the bottlenecked
Screw of the winding stair
Through the cork-dry air
Draws out what you expect,

Turning the bend: you swim
Up into the spilling
Well of the windows, filling
Your eyes up to the brim

With splashes of blue and yellow.
Wait: the moment will pass.
The swirl of the stained glass
Calms to a clear halo

Of mild sunlight on mist
Sustained by a line of thrown-
Up fountains of slim stone,
And the vault topping the thrust

Swells open and expands.
Imagine the builder crying
When he had mastered flying
Buttresses: "Look—no hands,"

Making light of the trouble
In scaling down a vast
Weight and volume of glassed-
In space to a sheer bubble.

Out of a thick-walled splendor
That pressed men down, this came,
From Chartres, from Notre-Dame,
This intimately slender

Spindle of stone and color
That will reach up and fall
Short of the vertical
Forever—as each pillar

Arches up to its aim,
You can still catch a glimpse
Of longing, before it limps
Back down the way it came.

CRAIG ANTHONY ARNOLD

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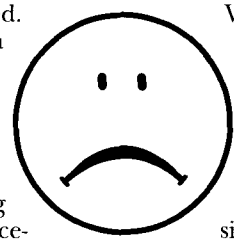
CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Nasty

WELL, I TRIED TO WRITE SOMEthing nice for the nice issue, but I couldn't help myself. Jesse Jackson came to Harvard a week ago preaching harmony between blacks and Jews. Having done more than anyone else to widen and deepen the breach between these two groups, he is now trying to put himself forth as the person best able to bridge it. What accounts for this conversion? One explanation is that Bill Clinton's victory has marginalized Jackson, because it was won essentially and deliberately without him. Moreover, Jackson's constituency is now much better (and more honestly) represented by Marian Wright Edelman and Hillary Rodham Clinton. He is no longer central, which means he is desperate; and he's desperate particularly for the friendship of the Jews whose distrust made him a burden for the Democrats. Overestimating the power of the Jews, as anti-Semites are prone to do, Jackson thinks that, in forgiving his sins, they will re-establish his respectability.

YOU WILL RECALL THAT IN 1979 Jackson remarked that "I am sick and tired of hearing about the Holocaust." Now, it seems, he cannot get enough of it. His appearance at Harvard, as at other venues where he gives his new line on the Jews, was in connection with the screening of "Liberators," a documentary first aired last fall by PBS. The film seeks to show that the all-black 761st Tank Battalion helped capture the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald and liberated thousands of the imprisoned Jewish remnant of Nazism. The problem, as TNR and others have pointed out, is that this film is largely untrue. (See Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Exaggerators," TNR, February 8.) Not that the 761st didn't fight with bravery; it just didn't actually liberate the camps involved. Robert Abzug, a University of Texas historian who wrote *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps*, is listed as historical adviser to the film but was never asked for advice. He says the film "violates any sense of historical accuracy," as does the Harcourt Brace book that came out with it. Philip Latimer, the president of the 761st's veterans association, says he wants the record corrected. The battalion had never claimed credit the film falsely awards it. This is not the first time PBS has distorted history, and it won't be the last (although WNET, the New York PBS outlet that owns the film, has finally, under scholarly and press attack, "temporarily" withdrawn it from circulation, pending whatever; you can tell they're very embarrassed). The Harvard showing was co-sponsored by the president of the university and the dean of students, a rare occurrence in itself. Surely this must be the first time such historically discredited testimony has been presented under such weighty academic patronage. It's not hard to figure out how this happened. Jackson runs something of a protection racket: you either facilitate his agenda or he adds to your problems.



THERE IS A MUSLIM holocaust, and it is happening in Christian Europe. The Vance-Owen peace plan, which the United States has criticized but will help enforce, ratifies the consequences of the tragedy. Of course, the U.N. did almost nothing to prevent it. Not even the Muslim states are agitated about the human disaster that has unfolded before our eyes, in stark contrast, of course, to their vigilance on behalf of the Palestinians. Maybe if the Bosnian Muslims really wanted sympathy for their sufferings they should have arranged for the Jews to inflict them. Their sufferings would never go off the world's radar screen; and the U.N. would defend them with unparalleled tenacity. Which leads one to wonder: Having just awarded Serbia what it won by aggression only yesterday, with what authority of logic, ethics or political realism can the U.N. insist that Israel be required to forfeit what it won in defense more than a quarter century ago?

THE INCLINATION OF THE WESTern powers to certify Serbian conquests as permanent is a precedent that they may soon rue. The Russians are pro-Serbian not simply out of historical nostalgia. They know they will be tempted, at least by adversity, to enforce their imperium, certainly in Moldavia, probably in Ukraine. And, if there, why not in the Baltics? If this happens, the Turks, who for decades have behaved so responsibly in a reckless environment, may also not be able to forgo the lure of expansion, perhaps only as a means to preserve their Atatürkist ways against a fundamentalist onslaught. To be sure, the Ozal government does not believe that the Iranians are positioned to win a conflict even for the hearts and minds of the five Turkic peoples who are now more or less sovereign. Since there are 14 million Azeris in Iran (a quarter of the population), the nexus of trouble may even run from Baku to Tehran and not the other way. Still, if Iran becomes restless, could Ankara stand quietly aside?

THERE ARE THOSE WHO THINK that the tyrants of, let's say, Argentina and their allies should have been punished for their crimes, and I agree with them. These are the same people who wanted strict de-Nazification procedures in postwar Europe and get apoplectic, even today, when some minor Vichy sympathizer makes his way in public life. They're not so zealous or concerned about the Communists of Central and Eastern Europe. Hysteria greeted Boris Yeltsin's proposal to outlaw the Communist Party in Russia. An article in the *New York Review of Books* a while back lamented a "witch-hunt" in Prague. This was provoked by a law barring agents of the secret police from high public office for five years. But *The New Yorker* has carved out a specialty in the genre. One article took on the case of Jan Kavan, who, revealed to have been an informer for the Czech security apparat, was precluded from running for parliament: a new "Dreyfus case," we were told. Then came the "Talk of the Town" elegy about Erich Honecker, in the dock for murder. The scandal for the chattering classes was the conflict of interest involved, because the unsigned piece was written by the wife of Honecker's lawyer. But the real scandal was what was written. "Many hold him responsible for the evils of the German Democratic Republic: its petty kinds of repression, more often found in families than in states, with mutual tattling, policing, confinement and what amounted to an individualized low-level brutality," the author prattled, excusing Honecker of responsibility for a regime that ruined countless lives and much of the country. He was somehow above it all, his "enthusiasm for the working class and for communism still fresh, boyish." Soft as the author is on the defendant, she's harsh on the prosecution, scorning it for doubting that Honecker's cancer was so severe as to warrant his being freed from standing trial. In the end the authorities let Honecker join his sister in Chile. It now turns out he was not as sick as the defense claimed. But you're not likely to read that in *The New Yorker*.

MARTIN PERETZ

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A New Head Start

During the past 12 years, we have suffered from divided government. Those of us, in the Congress and outside, who wanted to improve the lot of children fought for a variety of programs. Some never reached the president's desk because of Senate filibusters. Others were passed by the Congress only to be vetoed by the president.

There were a few exceptions. One was Head Start. Here was a program acknowledged by all to be good. Even during the years of budget cuts and vetoes, Head Start was expanded. Many of us saw its shortcomings, but we were reluctant to open up the issue, to raise doubts. We were afraid that if we offered suggestions for improving Head Start, the end result would be no improvements and the program might suffer cuts instead of being expanded.

But now, we're in a different period. Because we have a Democratic president and a Democratic Congress, we can, for the first time in years, talk openly about shortcomings and needed improvements without fearing that such a discussion will be used to sabotage the very programs we want to improve.

Throughout these years, most of us called for fully funding Head Start—that is, providing Head Start for every youngster who qualified. At present, only 3 out of every 10 children who qualify are actually served. But is fully funding the present program the best thing we can do for these youngsters, their families and their communities?

As the program has expanded, it has become much harder to find the additional tens of thousands of adults willing to work for very low pay.

First, it needs to be said that Head Start has been one of the most successful federal programs. As with all large programs, there is a range of quality. Some individual Head Start programs are outstanding, many are good, but a large number are poor. One of the major reasons for poor quality is the very low salaries paid to staff. As the program has expanded, it has become much harder to find the additional tens of thousands of adults willing to work for very low pay. More programs are staffed with inexperienced employees. Turnover is very high, and the infrastructure for training staff is practically nonexistent. A massive expansion will certainly be accompanied by massive deterioration. This, in turn, will be followed by exposés and by withdrawal of public support.

Is this an argument for doing nothing? Does this mean that President Clinton need not honor his pledges about Head Start? Of course not. But instead of mechanically pouring money into the existing program, we need to do some hard thinking about the right way to spend the money. These are some of the issues that need consideration:

- Prior to rapid expansion, we need provisions for adequate training for Head Start staff and for a level of funding that will enable Head Start programs to retain their staffs.
- The Head Start program needs to be redesigned to take care of today's problems. The number of hours and days each child attends are not enough to provide the full benefits of the program. Also, programs do not care for children enough hours and days to make it possible for parents to work. If we are serious about ending welfare as we know it within two years, we need a program for young children that cares for them all day and all year round.
- The current program is segregated by class. Only the very poor qualify. A better program would offer all-day and all-year Head Start to all children. There need be no cost to taxpayers since parents who can afford to would pay fees to cover the full cost of their participation. For many working parents, this would be economically more reasonable than the private arrangements they make now. It would be more educationally beneficial to the children as well.
- Most research shows that kids in Head Start do well but that gains they make in the program eventually disappear. Why not devote resources to starting earlier with many of these children? Why not devote resources to following kids who have benefitted from Head Start into elementary school with high quality programs designed to maintain the edge they have gotten?

More and more schools are thinking about keeping kids with the same teacher for two or three years. Head Start kids also need this continuity and this chance to develop a warm, long-term relationship with the person who is looking after them. Instead, we have a program where a child might have three or four babysitters to fill in the time after school and on holidays—and a new Head Start teacher every couple of months.

Head Start has been great, but it can be greater. Right now, we have a chance to stop and think about how to make Head Start better able to give kids what they need. We

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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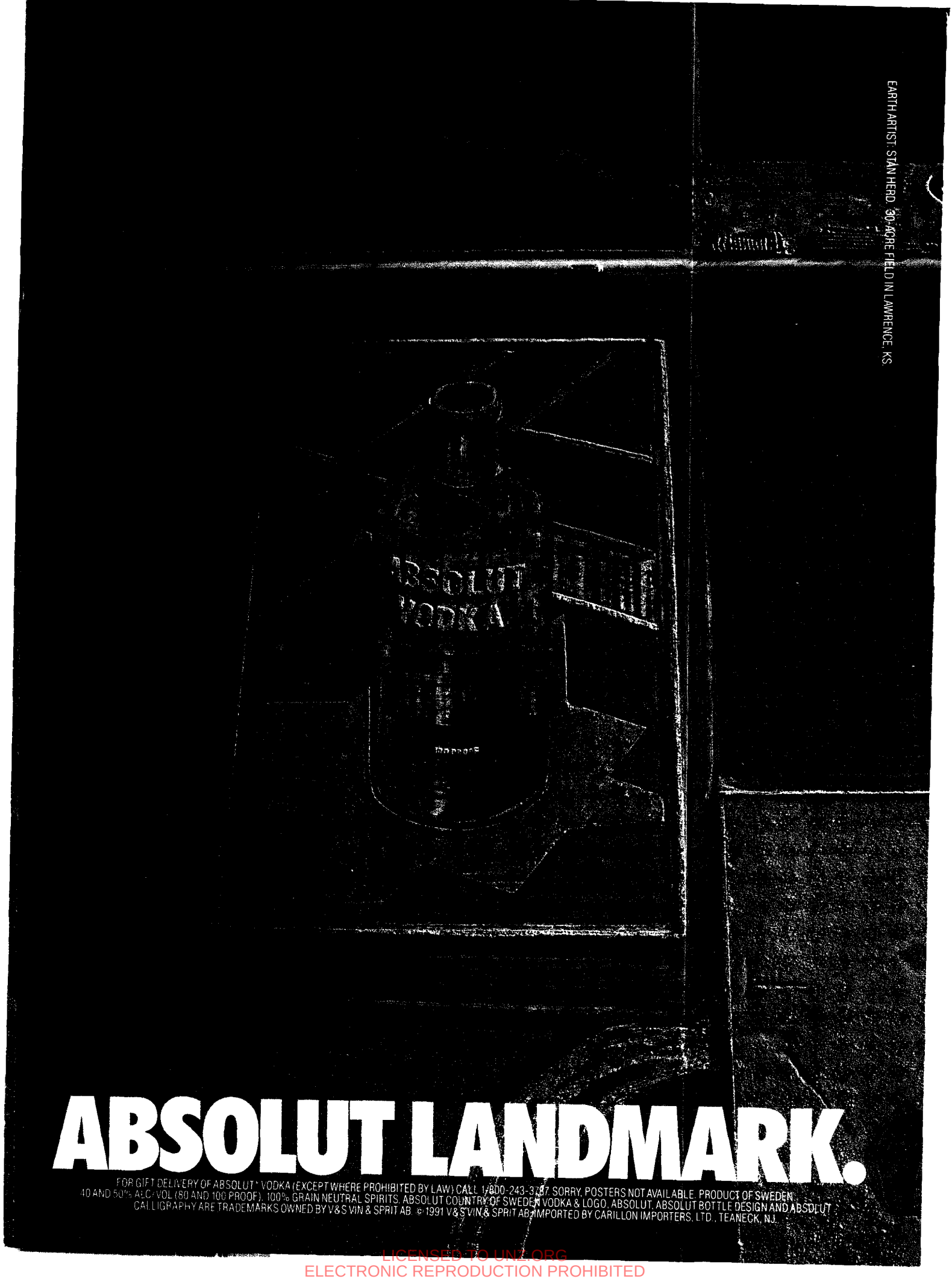
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